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Homiletic



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HOMILETIC

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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EDINBURGH: T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.

# HOMILETIC:

## LECTURES ON PREACHING,

BY

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IN MEYER'S COMMENTARY

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## PREFACE BY GERMAN EDITOR.



THE man who, in our day, brings a new text-book on homiletic to the theological book-market, must first of all convince himself as to his justification for this step. This is not a difficult matter for the editor of the lectures of the late Professor Christlieb. After the Lord had taken away the departed theologian from the midst of his busy energy of thought and action, his sons soon felt not merely the justification, but also the obligation, of making accessible to still wider circles the fruit of his labours in the field of practical theology, in which he had exercised the greatest influence on the young generation of theological students. As, however, they themselves had not time to prepare the manuscript for publication, they turned to their friend, who, as principal of the "Johanneum" (the school for evangelists, founded by their father), had already in other ways entered into the heritage of the departed, and who felt that he could the less easily decline this work, inasmuch as he hoped to obtain from it a stimulus for his own teaching, and consequently a benefit for his school.

Christlieb died at the moment when he had just begun to gather round him a larger circle of decidedly believing students of theology, who were trained by him to a more scriptural and practical conception and exercise of the preacher's office, and whose devoted activity in the Church has since given proof of the justice and usefulness of their master's teaching.

Christlieb was a man of the Bible and of practical life.

Both together gave him his originality and his penetrating power as an apologist. What he taught as a homilete, he had already put to the proof in a pastoral activity of many years in London and Friedrichshafen; and besides, he owed to these two spheres of work much varied development and suggestion—to his Swabian home the healthy realism, grounded deep in the Scriptures, and to his intercourse with England the free, wide outlook and the practical appreciation of actual life and its requirements. Christlieb resolutely breaks away from the ideal standpoint of Schleiermacher, who excludes from the pulpit missionary or evangelistic activity, and regards the hearers as a believing congregation, who only require the edification of solemn worship. Just as little sympathy is there between Christlieb's view and that which denies biblical sharpness and decision, such as, for instance, Krauss represents when he says: "He who comes to Church is in all his thoughts and actions partly born again, partly not yet born again" (S. 127)—as if there were partial new births!

Christlieb looks at our people, even our churchgoing people, as they are, and brings them the Bible as it is. The people who fill the churches consist partly, in his view, of those who do not yet possess, through conversion, true believing fellowship with Christ. The chief work of the preacher consists therefore not only in the edifying of believers, but also in preaching the gospel to those who do not yet belong to Christ. Every pastor should therefore be also an evangelist; otherwise, he soars in the clouds, preaches over the heads of his hearers, or lulls them in a secure but dangerous sleep. But whence is to come the power for the quickening of the people, for the instruction of believers? Christlieb's answer is: only from *bearing witness*. The preacher must be a *witness*, must bring to others that which he has himself felt and experienced; therefore, according to Christlieb, homiletic is really a *martyretic*. The idea of *witness-bearing* runs as the essential vital nerve through all his homiletic.

What emphasis he laid on the equipment of the preacher with the spirit of a witness may be most clearly seen from the exhortations to his hearers with which he was wont to conclude his lectures. One of these conclusions runs thus: "I said to you in the first lecture that the study of homiletic, if it is pursued in the right spirit, leads one above all to serious self-examination on the question, Am I myself a disciple of Christ, of whom I am to testify? What must I do that I may not stand in the pulpit as *χαλκὸς ἠχῶν ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον*? I then said to you that I felt myself under obligation in the sight of God to lay this cardinal question with all possible emphasis on your hearts. I have tried to fulfil this duty, and at many points to press again on your attention this one thing needful. It is only when we receive the unction from above that it is possible to preach the old truth in a language which is always new. Let me hope that, with the Lord's help, in the pulpit to which He will one day lead you, some seeds may spring up from that which in these lectures I have laboured to sow amongst you in the spirit of an evangelical faith—free, yet resolutely adhering to the teaching of the holy Scriptures."

The following pages may therefore be commended, not merely to students of theology and candidates for the ministry, but very specially to those ministers who have found the nimbus of Schleiermacher-like ideas destroyed by the serious experiences of practical life and the grave responsibility of their calling, who look upon their work pre-eminently as the salvation of the lost for Jesus Christ, and who now seek guidance to a successful exercise of their calling as preachers. Such pastors will find in Christlieb's homiletic a rich treasury of varied suggestion.

With regard to the preparation of Christlieb's manuscript for the press, this was not without its special difficulties. Christlieb had the custom of giving a succinct dictation, and of amplifying this still further in a freer statement. These free enlargements are also con-

tained in the manuscript, sometimes only in mere suggestions, but mostly in complete sentences. But these very sections offer to the homilist particularly rich profit. To prepare them for the printer was the editor's special task. Where they were rather fully expanded, or contained only repetitions, they have been abridged. Changes in style were only made when these were rendered necessary by incomplete sentences. For the rest, the expression has been left unchanged, where it does no injury to the lighter, freer mode of oral delivery. These sections are distinguished in this volume by closer type.

The list of homiletic literature has only been supplemented in so far as in some fundamental passages the *Homiletic* of Achelis was referred to in his *Practical Theology*, and the passages cited from Palmer's *Homiletic* have been quoted according to the Sixth Edition, edited by Kirn.

The following lectures were delivered in Bonn University. The innumerable annotations and additions in the manuscript testify to the indefatigable diligence with which Christlieb constantly sought to improve and enrich the old.

May the study of this book bring to many the same practical profit and blessing as the editor has received from it during the time that he has spent with it. Especially may the reading of this book serve to awaken in many of Christlieb's old students the memory of those blessed hours in his class, and may fruit for eternity result therefrom, so that the prayer of the departed for his students, without which he never entered his classroom, may still be answered.

T. H.

Bonn.

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## PROLEGOMENA.



### I. MEANING AND SCOPE OF HOMILETIC.

A. G. SCHMIDT, *Die Homilie, eine besondere geistliche Redegattung*. Halle, 1827.

CHRISTLIEB, art. "Homiletik und Homilie," in Herzog's *Realencyclopädie*, 2 Aufl. vi. S. 270–294.

#### (a) *Meaning of ὁμιλία.*

As in the case of many other words, Christianity has given to the idea of homily quite a specific meaning, which, however, has been understood sometimes in a more general, sometimes in a narrower sense.

Ὅμιλία, from ὄμοῦ and εἶλη, agmen (εἰλέω, congreco), signifies in classical, and similarly in New Testament usage, meeting in one place, assemblage, mutual intercourse, *friendly conversation* (1 Cor. xv. 33, ὁμιλῖαι κακαί, a proverbial quotation from Menander, which Tertullian translates congressus, confabulationes; compare Luke xxiv. 14–15; Acts xx. 11—parallel with διαλέγεσθαι—xxiv. 26; Prov. vii. 21 in the LXX). *In the early Church* the word signifies brotherly, edifying addresses of a conversational character at the private assemblies of the Christians for worship, and especially the practical concluding exhortation of the president, connected with the Scripture lesson. This address was at first short, and then became gradually longer. Out of it grew the sermon (Justin, *Apol. maj.* c. 67).

When this address was gradually changed into a more

artistic discourse of the bishops and presbyters, and the discourse (next to the Eucharist) began to form the principal feature of the Christian assemblies, *i.e.* from the time of Origen (see his *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, the *Song of Solomon*, etc.), the modest name passed over *à parte potiori* to these discourses, and hence, in the phraseology of the ancient Church, *ὁμιλία* signifies *congregational preaching*, a devotional address to believers, as distinguished from *κήρυγμα*, the public proclamation of the gospel to those who were not yet believers, mission preaching.

By their originally quite plain form, the *ὁμιλῖαι* are also distinguished from orations in the classical sense, *λόγοι*, orationes, rhetorical works of art, and, as a rule, retained in the Greek Church their unpretending name—which always suggested the more friendly conversational tone—even when in the golden age of Greek preaching (the fourth century) they had themselves become rhetorical works of art. Hence in the Greek Church to-day the homily generally means congregational preaching.

In the West the words *homilia* and *sermo* or *tractatus* were for a long time used promiscuously (cf. Augustin's "Exposition of Psalm cxviii."), but a distinction gradually came to be made between homilies expounding a special text (Augustin, *De his verbis, de eo quod scriptum est*), and the more artistic orationes, sermones, which enlarged rather on a general idea or followed a dogmatic, polemical aim (*e.g.* Augustin, *De Sanctis, de amore Dei et amore Seculi, contra Arianos*, etc.); and thus latterly that wider Greek idea of the homily as congregational preaching became narrowed to signify a definite species of preaching, namely, the simply *analytical style* which expounds the Scripture text verse by verse for the purpose of instruction, without a theme rhetorically formulated or a division announced (cf. in later times especially Menken's *Homilies on Elijah, the Epistle to the Hebrews*, and others), as distinguished from the now usual artistic synthetic style (with theme and divisions)—a distinction which, indeed, has more historic

than intrinsic value, but under which the one art by no means excludes the other.

Our German word *Predigt*, from *predicatio*, middle-high-German *predigete*, originated first in the Middle Ages, and, in accordance with the Latin, expresses rather the missionary κήρυγμα, but signifies any kind of devotional religious address to a large or moderately large gathering.

The etymology of the word ὁμιλία is clear and comparatively uncontested. Only Grossman (Kuhn's *Zeitschrift*, S. 26, 1862) derives it from the Sanskrit root sama, with dependent suffix, which reappears in *semel*, *simul*, ὁμοῦ, and therefore from the same root. Curtius, on the other hand, derives it from sama, with a derivative of εἶλω (and therefore adopts essentially the old derivation). The origin of its meaning in the ancient Church is also clear, namely, *congregational preaching*, from the primary signification of speech in a public assembly, and more particularly from the brotherly and conversational addresses of the Christians, for purposes of edification at their religious gatherings in private houses—the origin of congregational worship—at which only believers were present, as distinguished from the public missionary service in presence of Jews and heathen for the spread of the gospel, *e.g.* Acts xx. 20: διδάξαι ἑμαῖς δημοσίᾳ καὶ κατ' οἴκους.

(b) *Meaning of Homiletic and Scope of its Work.*

Following the fluctuating meaning and scope of ὁμιλία, the meaning and function of homiletic, *i.e.* the science of preaching, have also been variously understood.

If we abide by the primary idea of "homily," then it is historically and etymologically beyond doubt that homiletic is the *theory of congregational preaching*, which has to prescribe the principles and rules for this chief part of Christian congregational worship. And in this narrower sense, *i.e.* exclusive of propagandist mission preaching, the meaning and scope of homiletic are understood by most of the moderns, following the lead of Schleiermacher, thus by Schweizer, Palmer, G. Baur, Gaupp, Krauss, Bassermann, and others in their Homiletics, and by Otto, Harnack, and van

Oosterzee in their Practical Theology. They regard preaching only from the standpoint of the Church worship of believers, and consequently deduce the conditions of homiletic from the nature of Christian worship. Similarly, even Nitzsch (*Praktische Theologie*, ii. 2), who regards homiletic along with catechetical as Church didactics, and Achelis (*Praktische Theologie*, 1 Band, ii. S. 270): "The homilist speaks to adult Christians."

Here arises, only too easily, the danger of so restricting the aim of preaching to the edification of an already believing congregation, that it becomes more and more inadequate for our present congregational circumstances and their evangelistic requirements, which are constantly appearing in new forms in relation to those who have long since fallen away from faith (cf. *infra*, chap. i. 2 and 3). Besides, the German "Predigt," *praedicatio*, the commendatory proclamation of God's redemptive work, the New Testament *κήρυγμα*, always recalls the missionary element, and therefore the science of preaching, taking the word strictly, is of wider scope than homiletic, inasmuch as it includes "evangelistic," *i.e.* directions for preaching the gospel to those who are not yet, or in a relative sense are no longer, believers. Hence the more modern treatment of evangelistic or mission preaching, along with, but distinct from, homiletic (see below), and the explanation of many homiletes that preaching, although essentially for the purpose of edification and worship, must, nevertheless, be also missionary and evangelistic<sup>1</sup> in character (*e.g.* Beyer, *Das Wesen der christlichen Predigt*, 1861, S. 35-46; Vinet, *Homiletik*, 1857, S. 14 ff.; Achelis, *Praktische Theologie*, S. 272; and even Schweizer, *Homiletik*, § 70).

Others, therefore, claim *the whole field of preaching* for the science of preaching, regarding it not merely as a principal part of congregational worship, but generally as a

<sup>1</sup> *Note by Translator.*—The word here used in the German (*halieutisch*, from ἀλιεύω) is one for which there is in this connection no English equivalent. It suggests the idea of "fishers of men."

means for the extension of the kingdom of God, and change therefore its name also; so Siekel (*Grundriss der Homiletik*, 1829) and Stier (*Biblische Keryktik*, 2 Aufl. 1844). These writers, however, with all their striving after a *wider* idea of homiletic, really touch after all by these designations only its missionary aspect, for the "catching art" [*Halieutik*]—apart from the fact that it suggests purely mechanical ideas—is more suitable for the founding of the Church among those who have not yet been won to it at all, and, similarly, "Keryktik" is more suitable for those to whom the *κήρυγμα* is still something new. Hence neither of these words found much acceptance as a comprehensive name for the science of preaching.

The majority of our German homilettes, looking back to the historical idea of the homily, still adhere to the conception of homiletic as the *theory of congregational preaching*. Preaching, they say, has only to do with a part in the worship of those who are already believers, and not with the outside proclamation of the gospel to Jews and heathen. The latter is something special by itself. It may be called "evangelistic," and must therefore be specially treated along with homiletic. Hence the fundamental adhesion to the name "homiletic" most recently by Harnack, ii. 3 ff., and Achelis, 1 Band, ii. S. 271: "The attempts of Siekel and Stier to replace the name of homiletic by other names are to be regarded as useless, for since Luther's time the consciousness that the community of believers is in possession of God's redemptive revelation, is inseparable from the Church." A further strict consequence of this conception of the nature and scope of preaching is this, that the task assigned to it is purely that of devotion, teaching, edification, and not the element of awakening.

Thus, however, a far too narrow and one-sided view is taken of the aim of preaching, *in reference to our Church requirements of to-day*. We therefore touch here at once on a point—a principal point indeed—in which the hitherto accepted homiletic decidedly needed enlargement. May I then—considering only our State Churches—assume, without further question, that our "congregations" consist only of believers? With the present condition of congregations

through unbelief, indifferentism, and even atheism, extending to the working-classes, is there not an undeniable need of new evangelisation, of a new gaining for the faith, in numberless cases? Or is the Church to hand over this task for ever to those who are outside her communion? Not as if baptism (which already is being discontinued here and there) and confirmation did not constitute a difference even between our nominal Christians and the heathen; but has not the preacher the duty in regard to these, to bring them back again, if possible, to faith? Must he always address them as if they were believing brethren, and therefore always only to edify and never to awaken? And if both are necessary, must we not then postulate a conception of preaching, in which both are included, and which therefore reaches beyond the narrow limits of the brotherly *ἰμλι:εῖν*, and embraces the task of awakening to faith those of the congregation who no longer are, or who have not yet been, believers?

Moreover, are we not by the very word "Predigt," *prædicatio*, constantly reminded of *the missionary element*? It is therefore very significant that even the homiletés who are most anxious that homiletic should only treat of congregational preaching, like Schweizer, find themselves suddenly driven to a point where they must in honour admit that "to reject the halientic<sup>1</sup> impression on the minds of the hearers would be a one-sided view" (sec. 70). According to Achelis, *ut supra*, "it is the body of Christians, the Church itself (*ecclesia invisibilis*), which offers to itself (*sibi ipsi ecclesiae invisibili*) that which has long been its property, and by which it entirely exists." And, "on account of this relationship of the *eccl. invis.* to the *eccl. vis.*, congregational preaching never can, and never should be, mission-preaching, or even achromatic catechetical." Yet Achelis continues: "That it should operate for awakening, teaching, converting is naturally not excluded; it would rather fail of its purpose if these effects did not take place."

Now, because this conception—congregational preaching for those who are already believers—limits the scope of homiletic too narrowly for the needs of our time, others say that the science of preaching has to do *with preaching in general*, and not merely with edifying congregational preaching, not merely with a part of worship, but generally with the use of the Word for the extension of the kingdom

<sup>1</sup> See translator's note, p. 4.

of God. And because the word "homiletic" is too narrow for this, the attempt has been made to change the name. Sickel, "halieutik," the art of catching; Stier, "keryktik." But both confine themselves too exclusively to the missionary side of preaching, and assume an evangelistic appearance, while they put the edifying congregational preaching in the background.

What, then, is to be done? Shall we revert to the old, narrow idea of homiletic, as the theory of preaching to believers, or shall we, with the Methodists, quite ignore the distinction between mission and congregational preaching? No; but we must seek for a basis of the idea of preaching which is wide enough to embrace edification for those members of our congregations who are already believers, and awakening for those who are not yet, or are no longer believers, and from this starting-point so extend the scope of homiletic that it shall suffice for all our modern requirements.

For the adjustment of the meaning and scope of the science of preaching to our modern requirements, and especially in Germany, two things must be kept in view. On the one hand, a science of preaching, which includes evangelistic preaching, or missionary "keryktik," must embrace much which is no longer necessary for our task of church preaching, and which, indeed, would not be appropriate. For baptism and confirmation along with communion still make an essential difference between even our non-churchgoing "church members" and the heathen who are altogether outside the Church. Hence a distinction has latterly begun to be made in the system of training in practical theology between the fundamental lines of mission preaching and those of congregational preaching; thus Ehrenfeuchter, Otto, V. Zezschwitz, Plath. But, on the other hand, it can no longer be denied that, with the varied composition of most of our "congregations" nowadays of believers, half-believers, and even many who are quite negative in relation to the Church, and indeed unbelievers, a certain element of mission or evangelistic effort is requisite even in congregational preaching. *The*

*homiletic treatment of all as Church believers easily becomes in this case a dangerous fiction*; hence a theory of merely didactic preaching, which assumes in all our hearers not only the general objective faith of the Church, but a real personal faith of the heart—as distinguished from that which aims at the awakening, and practically a new grounding in the faith, of those who have fallen away from it,—threatens to become more and more inadequate and fruitless in respect of our requirements. If the former quite general conception of the scope of preaching is too wide for our Church circumstances, the latter is too narrow for times of declension from the faith.

Our science therefore must be built up on a conception of preaching which includes, at the same time, the element of devotion, teaching, and edifying for those who are already believers, as well as that of active awakening and evangelising for those who are no longer, or who have not yet become, really believers. And this is the biblical Christian idea of preaching as TESTIFYING OF CHRIST, which, in connection with the originally missionary and “keryktic” idea (cf. the early testimony of the apostles), includes, in respect to essence, the elements of edifying and awakening, and, in respect to form, the plain analytical style as well as the artistic synthetical style of preaching—and which therefore, under all circumstances, chiefly suggests the inner condition of a blessed work of preaching. To us, therefore, homiletic is *the scientific statement of the essentials of preaching as testifying of Christ*, and therefore the theory and history of congregational preaching (as distinguished from missionary “keryktik”), yet not in that historical and narrower sense of a devotional address to believers only, but to the congregation in general, with reference to all their actual and present needs. If ever, then in our day homiletic must be essentially *martyretic*, i.e. must be carried out in the spirit and scope of this idea, without the necessity of therefore displacing the traditional name.

Historically, the name homiletic appears first towards the end of the seventeenth century in Baier, *Compendium*



*theologiae homileticae*, 1677; Krumholz, *Compendium homileticum*, 1699; Leyser, *Cursus homileticus*, 1701, etc., as the science of preaching began to acquire for itself a more independent position in comparison with rhetoric.

The other names also which rationalism especially used, such as "ecclesiastical eloquence," or "the eloquence of the clerical profession," or "pulpit eloquence" (Steinbart, J. W. Schmid, Marezoll, Ammon, Alt, and others), as also the measure of independence which is assigned to homiletic, are closely connected with its relationship to rhetoric.

Every science must have regard to actual life, and the science of preaching also must deal with existing need; and it has to do with the people of Christian congregations, even though they are quite indifferent and unbelieving. A conception of preaching, which prescribes no Christian forms and rules, is therefore too wide. On the other hand, at least in our State Churches, it is in our day simply untrue to assume even the bare fundamentals of the faith as always existing in the case of all our "Church members." But if we were to treat those who no longer believe, or who do not yet believe, simply as believers, as merely requiring further teaching (so for the most part even Krauss, *Homiletik*, S. 127), then this would be the sure way to strengthen them in a dangerous self-deception. In the present times of declension from the faith, when as formerly there were Christian heathen, so now there are many heathen Christians, the need of mission work often arises within the "church," and forces itself, not merely into pastoral, but even into homiletic work. Hence some must be further taught, but others must be first awakened to faith, or, so to speak, reawakened.<sup>1</sup>

This is recognised even by those homiletetes who assign to preaching a devotional teaching scope only. We see them, therefore, turn and change, in order to include, in contradiction to their fundamental conception and in supplement of it, the active awakening element.

We seek, therefore, a new standpoint for a more expanded idea of homiletic, and find it in the idea of *μαρτυρία*,

<sup>1</sup>The case would stand otherwise if, at admission to full Church membership, stricter guarantees of personal faith were required.

which recalls the primitive missionary testimony of the apostles ("Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, unto the uttermost part of the earth," Acts i. 8 et seq.), which includes these two elements in it, and, in addition, indicates the subjective condition of true work. He who rightly testifies of Christ, will instruct as well as awaken faith. From this conception (*μαρτυρεῖν, μαρτυρία, μάρτυς, μαρτύριον*), which appears in the New Testament infinitely more frequently than *ὁμιλεῖν, ὁμιλία*, and the inner principle of which we shall have to examine more closely in chap. i., a unified homiletic may be constructed, which will also be adequate to our present-day requirements, without the necessity of including in it the whole system of missionary preaching amongst the heathen. For he who has to instruct believing brethren, can only do this if he testifies to them by his life of the salvation which is in Christ; and he who has to preach to unbelievers will only make an impression when his hearers feel that he has personally experienced the truth of his cause, and therefore is a living witness of it. And where believers and unbelievers are mixed, as in our modern churches, it is only a living witness who will be able to meet all the varied conditions.

A long list of homiletes has long felt, as it appears to me, the necessity of an expansion of the scope and aim of homiletic, but without being able to find a unifying fundamental conception for both the awakening and the teaching element. Schweizer has already been mentioned. Even the latest homiletic of the Protestantenverein, which in its very title goes a century back to the old rationalism (Bassermann, *Handbuch der geistlichen Beredsamkeit*, 1885), wants, indeed, to exclude altogether from preaching, as a discourse expressive of devotion, the element of doctrinal teaching, the character of a means of conversion or sanctification, but afterwards has to admit that teaching as a work of art must have an oratorical effect, and that this will consist in taking hold of men: he must therefore admit instruction and conversion as a secondary aim, only this must not constitute the fundamental character of preaching. Thus there is the same want of logical consequence as in Schweizer. Much more correctly Beyer (*Das Wesen der christlichen Predigt*, S. 31 ff.), who rightly protests against the one-sided devotional character of preaching, and against the departure of modern preaching and its character from

that of apostolic preaching. He adheres to the character of preaching, but emphasises the fact that the Church of to-day has many lifeless members (S. 41), and that therefore preaching cannot be thought of without a "halieutic"<sup>1</sup> tendency (S. 43); although predominantly devotional, it must also be of a missionary nature (S. 52). Similarly, Vinet (S. 15): "As a discourse incorporated in public worship, preaching must lead him who does not yet believe to the Christian truth, and to those who have already accepted it, it must more particularly explain and apply it." This is all quite correct; but where, then, is the inner reconciliation and bond of union for this twofold task? This has not hitherto been clearly recognised, and was only to a partial extent deduced from the early Christian idea of *ὁμιλία*. The step to unity of principle is now taken by us, inasmuch as instead of the one-sided *ὁμιλία* we lay down as the basis for our modern requirements only the old apostolic *μαρτυρεῖν*, which is amply adequate for both needs.

With regard to the expression "martyretik," Zezschwitz (*Handbuch der Homilie*, S. 239) remarks against it that there is wanting in it "that which is specific for the task of religious discourse before the congregation, in form and aim, as well as in the speciality of the channels of communication." A reference to the public, before whom the testimony is given, is certainly not contained in the expression itself, whilst in *ὁμιλία* the audience of brethren is suggested. But the nature of the address, so far as form and aim, and even matter, are concerned,—the warm outflow of the personal experience of salvation, with the object of winning the hearers to the Christian faith,—is contained in it at least as much, and even more strongly than in *ὁμιλία* in itself, which contains nothing, so far as form and aim are concerned, beyond the brotherly tone of the discourse. And when Zezschwitz adds that the expression contains nothing "with regard to the special nature of the channels of communication," this is absolutely incorrect. For the specific peculiarity of the channel is precisely indicated most strongly by the fact that the speaker *must be a witness*, and, therefore, must have personal experience of salvation. That in itself is, however, much more than that he should be able merely *ὁμιλία*, to speak in a brotherly way with others about salvation. And in *ὁμιλία* there is nothing at all to express

<sup>1</sup> See translator's note, p. 4.

the effect of preaching, while in *μαρτυρεῖν* the inmost secret of all successful preaching is indicated, the spiritual might which touches the hearer most deeply and fruitfully, and which is not similarly contained in any other expression for preaching.

But we do not strive over names and words. Let homiletic only be carried out in the sense and spirit and scope of martyretic, of the science of witness-bearing, which expresses most thoroughly the inner nature of preaching both to believers and unbelievers, and all requirements will be met, and we can more easily guard against the incursions of the sects, as soon as we keep in view more seriously and systematically, and even fundamentally, the duty of evangelising the lifeless, careless, or unbelieving masses.

Since the name homily was once naturalised (in the early Church) for a large body of sermons, and passed also from the Greek to the Latin Church, and thence into our modern usage, this tradition cannot altogether be ignored.

Still, in many aspects a change of the name to martyretik would be very good. It would help to put an end to many incomplete views, to extinguish many attempts to deceive oneself with regard to the condition of our hearers as already believers, and would lead him who is preparing for the preacher's office to ask himself beforehand the question: Am I a *μάρτυς*? But the change of name is not absolutely necessary. There are, indeed, many sciences which have a much richer, or even narrower, scope and meaning than their original name would signify (*e.g.* theology, symbolics, physics, etc.).

By the word *mathētic* (*μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*), the aim and scope both of instructive and also of missionary preaching would also be perfectly indicated, but the name would be too comprehensive, and would include also pastoral work and church discipline.

That which is unsatisfactory in the idea of homiletic could easily be avoided, if we determined to tear aside the Greek veil, in which all our sciences have been chiefly enfolded, and to speak simply of the art of Church preaching.

The rationalistic names of our science—pulpit eloquence, the eloquence of the profession, are closely connected with the abandonment of the independence of homiletic to rhetoric. Only he who regards it as an offshoot of general

rhetoric, and not as an independent, peculiarly Christian growth, will nowadays defend these titles.

## 2. RELATION OF HOMILETIC TO RHETORIC.

Cf. especially STIER, *Keryktik*, 2 Aufl. S. 172 ff.

PALMER, *Homiletik*, 6 Aufl. S. 349 ff.

HARNACK, *Idee der Predigt*, S. 73-91, 1844; *Praktische Theologie*, ii. 3, S. 32 ff.

### (a) *Historical.*

When Christian preaching arose, it found in existence a classical heathen rhetoric, which had long been fixed in its artificial forms, and which for the most part had already degenerated into mere word-painting or sophistry (cf. Acts xxiv. 3 et seq.). With these *πειθοὶ ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοι* (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5) it would at first have nothing to do. Rhetoricians who came over to the Church were obliged, like the actors, to give up their calling (Neander, *Kirchen Geschichte*, ii. 1, S. 181; Harnack, ii. S. 16). But the more cultured the preaching of the Church became, the less was it possible for it to avoid the transference of the rules of rhetorical art to the material of Christian preaching. Indeed, many of the most prominent Greek and Latin pulpit orators had themselves been formerly pupils of the rhetoricians, and even teachers of rhetoric (Basil, the two Gregories, Chrysostom, Augustin). Hence homiletic appears from its first beginnings down to more modern times (cf. even to-day the Catholic Jesuitical homiletic) to rest, in its formal side, so much on the basis of the ancient rhetoric (cf. Melancthon, Erasmus, and others), to derive its rules of art from it, and only to make use of the Christian material, that it has trouble—notwithstanding isolated warnings of Luther's against false trust in human artificial speech—in attaining its independence as a specific Christian discipline. It was quite appropriate, however, to treat oratory in general as the genus, and Christian oratory as species.

In later times Pietism strove after an essential separation of the two (cf. Spener, *Theologische Bedenken*, 3 Aufl. iii. S. 751; Joach. Lange; also Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, § 58), whilst rationalism loved to express the necessity of combining both in the so-called titles (cf. even Herder). Since then these views have remained somewhat divided.

Among the moderns the closer connection between homiletic and rhetoric is emphasised—though much more moderately than by the old rationalism—by Schott (*Theorie der Beredsamkeit*, 2 Aufl. 1828), Hüffel (*Wesen und Beruf des evangelischen Geistlichen*, 1882), and Alt (*Anleitung zur Kirchlichen Beredsamkeit*, 1840); also by Theremin (*Die Beredsamkeit eine Tugend*, 3 Aufl. 1889), Bassermann (*Handbuch der geistlichen Beredsamkeit*, 1885), and the later Frenchmen, as Viguier (see Lichtenberger's *Encyclopédie*). Schweizer, Vinet, and Nitzsch regard homiletic as a special department of rhetoric in general, without, however, mistaking the difference between political and ecclesiastical oratory.

Stier, on the other hand, makes energetic opposition to that alliance with the "strange woman, who gives smooth words," and claims that all the art and strength of preaching is only the outflow of the "new nature, unartificialised." According to Palmer, homiletic only presupposes rhetoric, without being a part of it. Similarly G. Baur (*Homiletik*, S. 92 ff.) and Gaupp (*Praktische Theologie*, i. S. 43 ff.). Even Harnack, most recently, wants to abolish that separating dualism between the two, as well as that naturalism which confounds them.

Thirty years ago half volumes were still written on the relationship of homiletic to rhetoric (cf. Schott, for example). It is a step in advance that it is now possible to treat the subject much more briefly. It is quite comprehensible that in the early Christian times the connection of preaching with the then prevailing rhetoric was roundly rejected, if we only consider the flattering, utterly untrue, ornate, and cunningly calculated address of the orator and advocate Tertullus (Acts xxiv. 3 et seq.). Hence Paul says (1 Cor. ii.

4, 5): ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν παιδοῦς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾗ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει Θεοῦ. The full spiritual stream of apostolic preaching shaped for itself its own plain, chaste, vigorous form of speech, and disdained the mere courting of applause by means of an oratory decked out with all the adjuncts of human art.

A change took place especially *since the end of the fourth century*, as Greek preaching became more and more artistic and fluent. The principal orators of the Christian Church had been previously pupils of the rhetoricians, and even teachers of rhetoric. Their *ὁμιλίαι* were in reality long, artistic *λόγοι*. Hence it came about that homiletic, on its formal side, was based from the beginning entirely upon the old rhetoric. So is it in most recent times in the case of Viguier and Bassermann. On the contrary, Spener (*Theol. Bedenken*, iii. Teil, S. 451, 1711) states: "The divine truths are of such light and strength, that even when stated in their simplicity, they themselves penetrate into the soul, and do not require to borrow their strength from human oratorical art. I assert that I have always wished the *artem oratoriam* banished from sermons." Similarly Joach. Lange, Rambach, etc., and Luther himself. Even Kant (*Kritik der Urteilkraft*, § 53), who, however, is only thinking of false rhetoric, finds this "prose run mad" unworthy of pulpit. Herder (*Kalligone*) defends the ecclesiastical use of rhetoric. And rationalism is so enamoured of the connection between rhetoric and homiletic, that even in its title it abandons the independence of the latter, and calls it not homiletic, but pulpit eloquence.

Since then views have been somewhat divided. The close connection with rhetoric is emphasised—though much more moderately than by the old rationalism, in consequence of their recognition of the specifically Christian matter and aim of preaching—by Schott, who, in his *Philosophischen und religiösen Begründung der Rhetorik und Homiletik*, S. 410–419, 1815, discusses fully the essential unity, and then the difference, between political and ecclesiastical oratory; and by Hüffel (*Praktische Theologie*, i. § 18), who states that "homiletic is a rhetoric limited and modified by the Church." To this view belong also Alt, Hoppin (professor in Halle, *The Office and Work of the Christian Ministry*, 2nd ed. 1879, p. 191 ff., and *Homiletics*, 1882); also Theremin

(*Demosthenes u. Massillon*, 1845), Schweizer, Vinet (*Homiletik*, S. 6 ff.: "Rhetoric is the genus, homiletic the species"), and Nitzsch, who, while fully recognising the difference between them, does not, however, regard it as essential, but would allow religious oratory to fall entirely under the scope of rhetoric in general. Even Tholuck (*Predigten*, 2 Sammlung, 1838, Vorwort) would recognise oratory as at least a means to the attainment of the aim of preaching. Similarly Oosterzee (*Praktische Theologie*, i. S. 79 and 205 ff.).

On the other hand, there have latterly been indications of a *reaction* to the views of those homiletes who seek to make homiletic independent in relation to rhetoric, and who emphasise the internal strength of matter and expression in the holy Scriptures as adequate to produce blessed results without the aid of much art. Stier is opposed to every "æsthetic accommodation." Harnack (*Praktische Theologie*, ii. S. 33) says: "If preaching has for its aim the nourishing and awakening of the life of faith, it is a mistake to rely upon any form, even the most beautiful, for the power to produce such an effect. *This power lies entirely and alone in the subject*, and where it is sought for in the form as well, it is thereby crippled, and is hindered in its operation."

#### (b) *The Standard of Judgment.*

A certain standard for the decision of this question can only be found by estimating that which is common to both, and that which distinguishes, in nature and in aim, religious and secular eloquence. A warm spirit penetrated with its subject, a dialectic discipline of thought, a clear ordering and condensed grouping of material, easiness of connection, facility and fluency of statement; moreover, a keen psychological gift of observation, which notes life in nature and history, as well as in human hearts: a vivid and artistic imagination, which transports itself with ease into the circumstances to be described, as it speaks from them and sets them forth; a broad, open, and at the same time firm outlook, which grasps without trouble analogies for striking illustrations from every sphere of life—all this foundation of nature and culture, from which all true eloquence arises,



is undoubtedly presupposed by religious eloquence also, as is shown by all great orators of the Church, from Basil and Chrysostom to F. W. Krummacher and Spurgeon.

Similarly with regard to *the formal structure of the sermon*, it is evident that, inasmuch as something of a technical character belongs to it as an ordered, solemn address, homiletic, in common with rhetoric, as the science of the artificial forms of speech, presupposes certain logical and æsthetic rules of structure, of connection, of the use of oratorical figures, etc., so far as the nature and aim of preaching demand and permit these—partly in common, and partly from the special requisite of general scientific culture in the homilist. No more than Christian thought and Christian taste exclude general human thought and æsthetics, can we talk of an absolute separation between homiletic and rhetoric.

Still, the distinction between these two sciences is much more significant and thorough than that which is necessarily common to both, in consequence (1) of the special *subject*, (2) of the definite ethical and religious *aim*, and (3) of the peculiar *persuasive agency* of Christian preaching resulting from these. Rhetoric lays down rules for any chosen subject of address, and therefore serves only a formal purpose. The science of preaching, as a specifically Christian growth, gives directions for the oratorical statement of the gospel of Christ with the avowed aim of winning its hearers for the kingdom of God, or of confirming them in it. *From the nature of this subject arises also the special form of address.* Hence homiletic must lay down its rules for the construction of the sermon in accordance with the special character of this subject and aim. It is only if, instead of finding the subject of Christian preaching in Christ and His salvation, we find it in the general ideas of duty, virtue, and happiness (cf. rationalism, and still to a certain extent Theremin, *ut supra*, S. 29), which also ultimately formed the chief subjects of the best heathen rhetoric, that the distinction in

scope and aim between the two sciences, and therefore any difference at all between them, vanishes. And in the rationalistic period, at least, this generalising and thinning-away of the specifically Christian subject of preaching has considerably helped to the treatment of homiletic merely as a special branch of rhetoric (Palmer, *Homiletik*, 1 Aufl.).

If, moreover, the rhetorical art only serves for purposes of this life, personal, or generally human, moral, social, and political, a higher aim, on the other hand, must give proportion and decision to Christian preaching—indeed the highest and purest aim conceivable, the salvation of souls, and hence one which lies outside the merely human sphere. And on account of this peculiar object and this specific spiritual aim, religious eloquence has recourse to quite special methods of persuasion; she must treat *sancta sanctorum*, and must therefore reject all artificial forcing of an immediate effect, since the hearer must not be merely quickly persuaded, but deeply and inwardly convinced, indeed convicted, and won over with heart and life to the cause. And the power for this must never be sought by the religious orator in his own subjective art, in rhetorical artifices, or in glowing diction or argumentation; he must seek for it essentially in the objective *might of truth and life-giving power of the divine word itself* (Isa. lv. 11; Heb. iv. 12; John vi. 33; 1 Cor. i. 18, etc.), and in the majesty of all that which the hearer instinctively feels to be God-given, and spoken to him by the divine commission; in short, in the authoritative strength of a *witness* supported by the Spirit of God and sealed by Him (cf. Luther, *Opp.* xiii. 1592).

The essential distinction between homiletic and rhetoric rests on three points: (1) In rhetoric we have choice of subjects, in homiletic a quite *definite subject*, the gospel. Hence (2) in the former all possible aims of humanity, politics, and law; in the latter always the one *definite, ethical, religious aim*, which is included in the subject, of advancing the kingdom of Christ, of winning men to it, or confirming them in it. (3) Hence arise also for homiletic quite distinct *methods of persuasion*; it must lay down for its

spiritual aims only spiritual methods, it must teach how to reach the conscience, how to state the truths of divine revelation, or Christian knowledge and experience of salvation, with the strength of testimony, and with awakening and edifying power. Rhetoric, which is of heathen, even of classical origin, uses very often all kinds of artificially forced means for reaching a speedy result, dazzling diction, artificial syllogisms or excitement of the feelings, and even of the passions, etc. Such methods should not be lightly appropriated by the Christian orator for his eternal aim. Homiletic, therefore, must train him only to the use of ethical and religious methods of persuasion. So already Spalding (*Gedanken über den Wert der Gefühle im Christentum*, S. 230 ff.): he warns against transferring ancient eloquence to preaching: "The Roman or Greek orator did not seek to make his citizens morally good men for their lifetime, he only sought *for the present* to bring them to a decision, which could be best effected by exciting the emotions. The Christian preacher has a very different aim; it depends upon him that a certain mode of thought and sentiment shall become the ruling principle in a man's life, and that is not the work of a mere emotion" (see Rothe, *Geschichte der Predigt*, S. 432).

The gospel supplies homiletic not only with a definite subject, and therefore with a special religious Christian task, but also, *from a formal point of view, with a definite style*, a characteristic stamp, a principle for formal construction. Subject and form have grown up in such close connection, that the peculiarity of the subject already carries with it the determination of the form (though I do not go the length of saying, with Palmer and Gaupp, that subject and form are not at all to be separated in homiletic). Homiletic, therefore, has not to lay down for pupil eloquence rules of speech, logic, and rhetoric taken from other sources; it must seek to deduce from the spirit and nature of Christianity the idea of preaching, its special task, and its special aim; and similarly, in its statement of the manner in which this task is to be executed in substance and in form, it must be guided throughout by the spirit of the gospel, and must only allow the co-operation

of the general logical, artistic, and æsthetic principles of oratory, in so far as this is necessary to the order and effective beauty of the sermon, and is not opposed to the plain simplicity of the gospel. Thus its right to independent existence in relation to rhetoric is secured to homiletic.

This independence can only become doubtful if, with naturalism, we squeeze down the specific contents of the Christian proclamation to the level of the general ideas of duty, virtue, and happiness. Then the difference in the subject which the Christian preacher and the old heathen orator have to treat of at once disappears. For virtue, and duty, and social happiness were ultimately the chief subject for the better heathen rhetoric at least, although in itself it had no definite scope prescribed to it. And in the rationalistic period, at any rate, this watering-down of the specific Christian contents of preaching to those abstract ideas has chiefly contributed to the regarding and treating of homiletic merely as a special branch of rhetoric. Even with Theremin, duty, virtue, and happiness appear as the ideas governing the will, which should lie at the ultimate basis of all oratory, even of pulpit oratory. But Palmer very properly remarks, in opposition to this (*Homiletik*, 1 Aufl.): "If we tune the strings at so low a pitch that they scarcely emit any more than an audible Christian or religious sound, then, indeed, we may find them harmonising with the ideas of rhetoric; but against such lowering of the key we must protest. CHRIST is the fundamental idea of preaching, but not the ideas of duty, virtue, and happiness" (see Gaupp, S. 46).

The pulpit orator, therefore, must seek the strength for successful proclamation of the Word in nothing else than in the might of *the truth of the divine revelation itself*, in the vital force inherent in the word of God itself, "for the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. iv. 12); "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John

vi. 63); "the preaching of the cross . . . unto us who are saved is the power of God" (1 Cor. i. 18). In spiritual and religious matters the hearer is not convinced, subdued by human art, but only by that which impresses him with the force of divine authority, and along with which he sees from the speaker: It is not merely he, the man, who says this, but God is speaking through him to me, a sinner or his child; it would not therefore be right to resist in this case. The effect of preaching lies, therefore, in the power of a testimony anointed by the Spirit of God, the truth and seriousness and importance of which is infallibly attested by God's Spirit to the heart.

Luther says (*Opp.* xiii. 1592): "Let us therefore lay aside this foolish confidence, as if *we* wanted to have some part in the work wrought in our hearers by the Word; but let us rather be diligent in prayer, that *God* without us will make His Word mighty and active in our hearers. . . . For no person will bring a man to the point of truly believing, but God's Word must bring him to a point when he shall know for certain that it is God's Word."

(e) *Result.*

From what has been said, it follows that eloquence has no independent value for preaching; it cannot even be regarded as a secondary aim, still less as an independent aim. Its use must be not so much conscious—which would easily become self-pleasing and likely to prevent the blessing—as involuntary, the preacher being quite full of the subject of his text, and using all his gifts and powers, and therefore also his rhetorical gifts, with inward compulsion in the service of the sacred task of proclaiming the gospel. And here it is never the man only who constructs and works in his own strength, but the Spirit of God in the Scripture and in the preacher; the man is *συνεργὸς Θεοῦ*, 1 Cor. iii. 9 (cf. also Gaupp, S. 86 ff.). This co-operation of God and His Spirit in the speaker, which, however,

presupposes on his part the most intense spiritual personal exertion and ethical religious personal absorption in the subject of his text, is the inmost source of true religious eloquence (cf. also Marheinecke, *Grundlegung der Homiletik*, S. 77). Hence also the artificial arrangement of the sermon as an oration must never injure the simplicity and force of the Scripture passage which it is to explain, the human formal grouping and finish must never interfere with the course which the delivery may take under divine control, or generally with the operation of the Spirit of God in the preacher.

From this whole higher sphere, *i.e.* from the contents and spirit of the gospel, corresponding to the nature and aim of the kingdom of Christ, and in particular, of Christian worship, homiletic, as *a science peculiar to Christianity*, and therefore *occupying an independent position in relation to rhetoric*, has to develop the idea of preaching, and its execution in matter and form. Hence all the more modern Protestant homilettes are agreed that homiletic belongs to theology, and to that branch of it which has to treat of the ecclesiastical activity of Christianity—to practical theology; whilst in the case of Catholic homilettes its separation from general rhetoric is certainly more difficult, and must be so, with their subordination of what is biblical and Christian to what is ecclesiastical and traditional, and especially with the looser connection of Catholic preaching with the Scripture text (cf. *e.g.* Lutz, *Handbuch der Katholischen Kanzelberedsamkeit*, 1851; Gatti, *Lezioni di eloquenza sacra*; and after him, Molitor, *Vorträge über geistliche Beredsamkeit*, 1860).

The source of genuine religious eloquence lies much deeper and higher than in the study and appropriation of rhetorical figures and other artificial human methods—in the deep glow, in the enthusiasm of the heart for the divine truth and beauty of the gospel, which the Spirit of God produces in the speaker, when he humbly becomes absorbed in his text; and when this unfolds itself in his

address, then also the Spirit of God co-operates, impressing and touching the hearts of the hearers. In this self-abandonment to the holy unction from above, in the *παύρησία* produced by the Spirit, in coming forth *μετὰ πνεύματος καὶ ὀυίας*, and therefore in the co-operation of God with the speaker lies *the inmost source of true religious eloquence* and the secret of its fruitful operation. Hence Gaupp can speak of preaching "as an act of the Holy Spirit through the medium of the holy Scriptures." And Marheinecke: "It is not man's pectus, quod disertum facit, but Deus, qui pectus facit disertum." The father of Greek homily, Origen, had already recognised this: "The preacher should not ostentatiously parade his own assumed wisdom, but should seek to lead to the understanding of the holy Scriptures; his delivery should be simple without artificiality; he should not puff himself out before his hearers with his assumed art: divine grace must give the proper emphasis to his words; the unction of the Spirit must dwell in them; for without this all his speaking will remain fruitless," (vol. ii. *Hom.* 13 on *Exod.* 177; vol. iv. *Comm. on Ep. to the Romans*, ix. 3. See Rothe, *Geschichte der Predigt*, S. 19).

The Divine Spirit must, however, have room and freedom for His operation: He is not to be restricted by human artificial forms and rules as if in tight-laced boots. We must not try to stand and strut about in Saul's armour, when the simple sling and pebbles are much more easily handled by us. The Spirit is quenched by artificial display. Hence the formal scaffolding of the sermon must never interfere with the influx of new matter under the guidance of the Spirit (often for the first time in the pulpit). Thus arises the circumstance that, with growing inner ripeness and spiritual experience, many preachers, who began at first very rhetorically, learn to speak more plainly as they grow older—and certainly not to the injury of the Spirit and of their power!

The rhetorician often thinks that he can use his art as a specific means of persuading men immediately to this course or that, or of evoking at will this or that emotion. So, for example, a preacher taught rhetoric in his educational institution at Rome (see Palmer, S. 20), and when a stranger some years ago visited the institution, he showed the art of his pupils by the following request: "Signor N. N.,

awaken in this gentleman the emotion of sympathy by the appropriate rhetorical figure :” . . . “now give this gentleman the impulse to repentance by the suitable rhetorical means.” These are arts of fencing which may kindle here and there a fire of straw, but which, from a spiritual aspect, can never produce a deeper result.

How little the Catholics can still distinguish between the old rhetoric and spiritual pulpit oratory, because their preaching occupies a much looser relationship to the text of Scripture, appears recently, for example, in the case of the Jesuit Schleiniger, in his *Grundzugen der Beredsamkeit*, 1868, in which large extracts, not only from the ancient classics, but also from various modern parliamentary speeches, are given as models. If these were only studied by future advocates, parliamentary men, etc., then there would be no objection to this, but for a preacher it would easily become the greatest danger. For him the study of secular rhetoric very easily becomes an immoral, frivolous, coquettish art and training, which almost always seduces him into the desire of making a display of his own oratorical skill. The present generation hears in the Church, even without this,—so far as it still hears at all,—quite too much the man only, instead of the message of God through the preacher, and instead of seeking spiritual edification by means of the objective truth of Scripture, gives itself up far too much to examination of the subject brought forward, to criticism. And nothing tends so much to strengthen it in this as rhetorical displays of art in the pulpit, which lead men to think at once of the human artist only, but not of the messenger of Christ, and to imagine themselves called to criticise only. In the best case this results only in recognition of “the beautiful sermon,” *i.e.* in *praise of the man*, but not to the admiration of Christ, to self-surrender to the saving truth, no matter by what mouth it was proclaimed. And yet this ever remains certainly the work of a faithful preacher, so to set forth the Master and His grace that the people will quite forget the person of the human speaker in the beauty and majesty of Christ! He who wants his preaching soon to be destitute of all true spiritual fruitfulness, will, in artistic vanity, lay all the stress on perfection of form, will depend on secular rhetoric. *The history of Greek preaching* is a lasting proof of this; for in its case artistic rhetoric so overgrew the simplicity of the



proclamation of the gospel, that the fruitful, edifying, vital force of God's Word was finally smothered under it, and then even preaching ceased. Rhetoric became, indeed, its coffin!

Hence Gaupp (S. 53) rightly says: "It is certainly time that the Protestant Church should cast off the fetters of an oratorical art which are unworthy of her preaching, and which have in no small degree hindered the Holy Spirit in the operation of His light and His power."

### 3. SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCIENCE OF PREACHING.

In the development of a *theory* of preaching, the long-existing homiletical *practice* is only gradually reflected, and strives after a scientific self-knowledge with regard to the laws of its perfection. The history of homiletic is therefore considerably younger than that of preaching itself, though both are usually considered together, because the practice in its turn receives manifold impulses from the theory. We limit ourselves here to the former; for the latter, see the article "Predigt," in Herzog's *Realencyklopädie*, 2 Aufl.

LITERATURE.—Short sketches of the history of preaching and homiletic in the homiletical handbooks: first in Mosheim, *Anweisung zu Predigen*, 2 Aufl. 1771; individual history in P. Roques, *Le Pasteur Evangelique*, German, 1741; recently, especially in Baur, S. 20 ff.; more in detail in Henke, S. 356–388; Harnack, S. 41–156; Oosterzee, S. 84–188; cf. also the theological encyclopaedias, e.g. Pelt's, S. 644 ff. Special accounts: Eschenburg, *Versuch einer Geschichte der öffentlichen Religionsvorträge in der griechischen u. lateinischen Kirche*, 1785 (incomplete); J. W. Schmidt, *Kurzer Abriss der Geschichte der geistlichen Beredsamkeit und Homiletik*, 2 Aufl. 1800 (3rd part of his *Anleitung zum populären Kanzelvortrag*, 1789; judgment often one-sided); Schuler, *Gesch. der Veränderungen des Geschmacks im Predigen, insonderheit unter den Protestanten in Deutschland*, 3 Teile, 1792–1794, and *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Veränderungen*, etc., 1799 (useful material only); Schudereff, *Versuch einer Kritik der Homiletik*, 1797; Flügge, *Geschichte des deutschen Kirchen*

*und Predigtwesens*, 2 Teile, 1800: v. Ammon, *Geschichte der Homiletik*, 1 Teil, 1804 ("Huss to Luther, or a History of Preaching"); Paniel, *Pragmat. Geschichte der christlichen Beredsamkeit und Homiletik*, i. 1, 1839 (only to Chrysostom and Augustin); Lentz, *Geschichte der christlichen Homiletik*, 2 Teile, 1839 (much good material, but not enough sifting and grouping of the matter): Schenck, *Geschichte der deutsch-protestantischen Kanzelberedsamkeit*, 1841: Nesselmann, *Übersicht über die Entwicklungsgeschichte der christlichen Predigt*, neue Ausgabe, 1862 (very useful for reference). Further works, less important or not independent, see Paniel, Lentz, Henke, Harnack. For the history of Catholic homiletic: Kehrein, *Geschichte der katholischen Kanzelberedsamkeit der Deutschen*, 2 vols. 1843, and the homiletical handbooks of Zarbl, Lutz, etc. For the history of other than German preaching, especially Dutch: Oosterzee, *ut supra*. As additional sources, some passages in the handbooks on the history of preaching or on particular periods of it, in Beste, Sack, Cl. G. Schmidt, Vinet, Sprague, H. Fish, etc., and in the collections of sermons in historical succession in Surius, Combefisius, Pelt and Rheinwald, Augusti, Nesselmann, etc. (for further particulars, see history of preaching). Many works which aimed at too wide a scope stopped at the first point. Many, in spite of their title, are not so much a history of the science of preaching as of preaching only.

For its origin as an independent science homiletic has chiefly to thank Protestantism. Hence the Reformation period is the chief turning-point in the history of its development.

(a) *Beginnings of this Science in pre-Reformation Times.*

(a) *Ancient Church.*—As all practical theological systems of teaching began with individual instructions and directions for the servants of the Church, so it was with homiletic. Detached statements about the personal, and especially *moral and religious qualifications* for preaching, necessity of the *χάρισμα διδασκαλίας*, more accurate knowledge of the Scriptures and apostolic tradition, hermen-

eutical hints on allegorical meaning, and also warnings against excessive heathen rhetoric, instead of allowing the Christian truth, through the strength of its own foundations, simply to speak for itself, are found in the father of Greek homily, Origen, and then in Cyprian, Lactantius, Arnobius (see the passages in Paniel, 166 ff., 230 ff.). With the elaboration of the simple analytical homily into the more artistic synthetical sermon, there appear, under the influence of secular rhetoric, in whose schools the most important Christian orators are trained, the first attempts at an arrangement of homiletical rules, as the result of their own rich homiletic experience, in the two leaders of Greek and Latin preaching, Chrysostom and Augustin.

In his work, *De sacerdotio*, excessively weighted with praise of the priesthood, Chrysostom lays down, especially in books iv. and v., and elsewhere in aphoristic expressions, but yet without any systematic order, the personal, and even here and there the material and formal requisites of homiletic: abundant eloquence (*Hom. 10 in ep. ad Timoth.*); dialectic handling of the Word, constant readiness to defend the faith, diligent study of the Scriptures (*Hom. de utilitate lection. Script.*); not looking for the praise of men but for the approval of God, but also great pains in preparation to satisfy the high expectations formed of a scientifically trained pulpit orator, the necessity of sermon introductions (*Hom. de mutatione nominum 2*); doctrinal points, such as the soul, the body, immortality, the kingdom of heaven, hell, repentance, baptism, the forgiveness of sins, etc. (*Hom. de baptismo Christi*). Similarly also Basil (*Sermo asectica de fide; hom. attende tibi*) and Gregory of Nazianzen (*Carmen de episcopis*). A real inner union of the aim of Christian preaching with the art of heathen oratory does not yet appear in these orators, notwithstanding particular statements against the artificial *copia verborum*.

On the other hand, we find a more sober Western distinction of the scope of preaching from ancient rhetoric in Augustin's *De doctrina christiana*, bk. iv. (added to the

first three in 427), a work in which, however, the former teacher of rhetoric does not quite renounce himself. Having stated in the first books, in a kind of biblical hermeneutic, the *modus inveniendi* of the meaning of the text, book iv. explains the *modus profereudi*—an introduction to a system: first, *finding the material*, in which the Scriptures are made the basis and substance of all Christian preaching, and then *the methods of its exposition*. For the latter, indeed, in view of dexterous opponents, rhetoric could not well be dispensed with (iv. c. 2, 3), yet the Doctor Evangelicus would have the true wisdom as well as the right forms of expression, eloquence in keeping with its subject and its aim, and especially the necessary *perspicuitas orationis* to be learned from the holy Scriptures (c. 4–11). Then, following Cicero's *Orator*, he states the *threefold aim of oratory*—the *docere, delectare, flectere*, with special emphasis on the last for the purpose of producing fruit; and the *threefold style*—*parva submisse, modica temperate, magna granditer dicere*, and the wisdom and necessity of varying this form of discourse with examples from Scripture and the Fathers, so that the hearers may understand and gladly hear and follow (c. 12–25), and also the necessity of consistency between the personal life of the preacher and his own exhortations (c. 26, 27, 29), and of prayer in preparation and on appearance before the congregation (c. 15 and 30). Some of these maxims see in Cyprian, *Ep. 1 ad Donat.*; Hilary of Poitiers, l. viii. *De Trinit.*; Ambrose, *Ep. ad Constantium, Ep. 23 ad Vigil.*; and Jerome, *Comm. in ep. Galat. præf., Ep. 57 ad Pammach.* and *Ep. ad Nepotiam*.

Chrysostom says in his work, *De sacerdotio*: “Besides example, there is only *one kind* and *one way* of the soul's salvation, conversion *by the Word*. It is the instrument for nourishing—it takes the place of medicine, fire, iron,” etc. “The priest must be ready at all times to enter into controversy with Jews, heathen, and other heretics. He must therefore possess, like the Apostle Paul, the gift of special

and trained eloquence. Hence we do not merely call him an idiot who is unpractised in subtle rhetoric, but also him who does not understand how to fight for the doctrines of truth. For if a pastor is lacking in power of speech, the souls intrusted to him suffer great harm." In the *preparation of a pulpit discourse* he demands great effort; but when he gives as the reason for this, that the world has high expectations of a scientifically trained orator, the vain Greek spirit of desiring to please men is only too evident.

On the *formal* side, Chrysostom emphasises the necessity of sermon *introductions*: "Just as a body must have a head, a tree a root, and a river a source, so also must a discourse have an introduction." "He who is occupied the greatest part of his time in worldly affairs, and only appears here seldom and for a short time, must be prepared by the introduction which precedes the discourse; the way must be as it were prepared for him, so that he may not go away without profit. It is also necessary to praise those who come, and on the other hand to blame those who are absent, in order that the zeal of the former may be increased by praise, and the laziness of the latter may be removed by blame." Again, however, he makes it clear that "We must not speak to please men, but must proclaim the truth from a full conviction" (see Hom.: non esse ad gratiam concionandum; see Paniel, S. 338 ff.).

Augustin urges that, especially in the case of difficult subjects, the Christian teacher should have less regard to oratory than to a clearness (*evidentia*) which will make the matter intelligible: where everything depends upon clearness, one must avoid every word-ornamentation which would not help to make the matter plain. The chief effort of the preacher must be directed to making his hearers *understand him, hear him gladly, and follow him* (too subjective!); and the latter will happen the more easily, the more the personal life of the preacher corresponds with his exhortations (Paniel, S. 685 ff.).

( $\beta$ ) *Middle Ages*.—With the cessation of the first bloom of Christian artistic preaching, with the growing exaggeration of the outward ecclesiastical sealing by the sacraments, with the increasing abundance of liturgically fixed, symbolical, and sacrificial functions above the homiletic-didactic in

worship and in church training, and the consequent neglect of preaching, these beginnings of a homiletic also disappear. Instructions in liturgies and pastoral duty take the place of instruction in preaching—as, for example, the *Liber curae pastoralis* of Gregory the Great. Hence the contributions to homiletic from the Middle Ages are comparatively scarce. Still Augustin's introductions work quietly on. In Rhabanus Maurus (*De clericorum institutione et caerim. eccles.* l. iii. e. 19 and 28–39) they again appear with the writer's own. Later on we meet in Guibert of Nogent's (*d.* 1124) liber, “Quo ordine sermo fieri debeat” (*Opp.* Paris, 1651, pp. 2–8), a temperate urging of such a brevity of discourse as will enable it to be retained, of interpretation more tropological than allegorical, more instructio morum than in mysteries of doctrine, and especially of the use of one's own personal experience in the treatment of various spiritual conditions. The Cistercian Alanus of Ryssel (twelfth century), in his “Summa de arte praedicatoria” (*Opera*, ed. C. de Visch., Antwerp, 1654), makes a noteworthy attempt at further systematising: meaning and nature of preaching (manifesta et publica instructio morum et fidei, etc.; see Lentz, i. 232 ff.); arrangement of particular subjects; who should preach; before whom (only the fidelibus), with directions for captatio benevolentiae; why and where (not completed).

Among the different homiletic movements of the *second half of the Middle Age*, scholastics, popular preachers, mystics, and pre-Reformation preachers, it was only the first, with their artistic preaching, who felt the need of a definite theory of preaching also; the practical interest predominated in the others. Yet we need only mention Bonaventura's *Ars concionandi*, Augustinian in its design, scholastic in its execution (divisio—distinctio—dilatio). Against the exerecences of the scholastic preaching, its empty ostentation with its dialectic art, its striving after subtleties by heaped-up distinctions, divisions, quotations, etc., excessive length of exordia, and the violence done to

the text by all this, Humbert de Romanis, the General of the Dominicans (*d.* 1277), writes strongly in his "Tractatus de eruditione concionatorum," l. ii. (*Biblioth. Max. P. P.*, tom. xxv.), a very creditable criticism, with positive suggestions promptæ eudendi sermonem.

Towards the end of the Middle Age, when the Latin postilla ("post illa," *scil.* verba Script. s.), with their attractive titles: dormi secure, sermones parati, etc. (see Geffcken, *Bilderkatechismus des 15 Jahrhunderts*, S. 13), spared many the labour of sermon preparation, Nicolas of Clémanges (about 1400), in his *Liber de studio theologico* (see d'Achery, *Spicileg.* i. 472 ff.), exhorts to a more diligent study of the Scriptures and to a lively, effective preaching of the word of God to the ignorant people. A *Tractatus solennis de arte et vero modo prædicandi* collates homiletical rules from the writings of Thomas Aquinas (therefore falsely ascribed to him) and other doctors of the Church; cf. also the tract of Henry of Hassia, *De arte prædicandi* (end of the fifteenth century). The Basel pastor, Surgant, in his *Manuale curatorum, prædicandi præceus modum*, 1503 (see Geffcken, S. 196 ff.), demands, in opposition to the spreading arbitrariness, ambiguity, and even ludicrousness of preaching, strict arrangement in form and matter of the parts of the sermon (thematis propositio . . . divisio, prosecutio, conclusio), simple edification and valid argument.

Finally, Reuchlin's *Liber congestorum de arte prædicandi*, 1504, already casting a glance forward to the biblical-evangelical revival of preaching (see the dedication), holds up, in Augustin's fashion, but very briefly, before the partly neglected, partly deteriorated pulpit oratory, the rules of the classical rhetoric, which, while noting by way of precaution the peculiar theme of Christian preaching (see chap. "De locis communibus"), he transfers to the yet little systematised, though in particular departments fairly elaborated, framework of homiletic (de inventione, de principio, de lectione, divisione, confirmatione, con-

clusionione, de locis comm., de memoria), demanding, along with suitable material, a worthy, natural exposition (see also on him and Erasmus Wagnitz, *Homiletische Abhandlungen*, 1789).

(b) *The Scientific, Systematic Cultivation of Homiletic from the Reformation to the Present.*

(a) *Its expansion to a complete science, on the basis of the ancient rhetoric in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.*—The evangelical purification and revival of preaching in substance and form, its reconstruction on the basis of the holy Scriptures as their exposition and application, its restoration to a leading place in public worship, the scriptural change in the whole conception of the spiritual office as essentially a service of the Word, as it made way in the time of the Reformation, chiefly through Luther's writing and practical example, and especially his powerful preaching, led naturally also to new and deeper inquiries as to the nature and scope of preaching itself, and hence to the systematic construction of homiletic as a science.

The very first completely executed scientific homiletic, and one which was influential in both camps, the *Ecclesiastes sive concionator evangelicus*, Ll. iv. of Erasmus (1535–1543; new edition by Klein, 1820), although the work of one who maintained an attitude of indifference to the Reformation, rejects so little the newly-risen light of that time, that it indeed, more than Reuchlin's, forms the *transition to evangelical homiletic*. After the sharp scourge which the elegant satirist in his *Laus stultitiæ* and the *Colloquiac* had laid on the hollow emptiness of the preaching of the time, he here shows positively the high task of the preacher, and the biblical-ecclesiastical way of fulfilling it, showing in book i., along with the importance and dignity of the preacher's calling,—surpassing that of monk and mass-priest,—*the personal qualifications* required for it, thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and the



Fathers, skilfulness in expression, purity of heart, faith, etc., and in book ii. quotes from all kinds of heathen and Christian writings, from Plato and Demosthenes to Augustin and Bernhard, model passages for the exercise of style and knowledge of the oratorical art. Then he passes on in this as well as in book iii. to apply the laws of dialectic and rhetoric to the structure of the sermon from the inventio to the pronuntiatio, discusses the categories of division, *τόποι*, the sorts and methods of amplification, rhetorical figures, the superiority of grammatical and literal to allegorical interpretation, and so on. To this *formal* homiletic, book iv. finally adds instructions about *material*, biblical subjects for preaching, dogmatic and ethical subjects in a schema of the leading Christian doctrines, with method of proof from Scripture.

Close to him in basing directions for preaching on the ancient rhetorical forms are Melanchthon's *De rhetorica*, Ll. iii. (later entitled *Elementorum Rhetorices*, Ll. ii.), often printed since 1519, which, with his homiletical suggestions in the *Unterricht der Visitatoren*, 1528, and his treatise *De officio concionatoris*, 1535, formed in the formal aspect (inventio, dispositio, elocutio) chief authority on preaching at that time, just as in the material aspect his *Loci communes* and his *Annotationes in evangelia*, edited by Arsatius Seehofer (not "Schofer") in 1545 (cf. also his *Enarrationes evangeliorum dominicalium*, 1544, and Erasmus' *Paraphrases of the New Testament*), but especially Luther's "Postillen," whilst the *Ratio brevis sacrarum tractandarum concionum*, etc., 1535, associated with Melanchthon's name, did not come directly from himself. In contrast with Luther's simple analytical style of preaching, Melanchthon's "rhetoric," and especially his "annotationes," by giving the points for homiletical teaching in the gospel for every Sunday, lay the foundation for the rise of the thematised, artificial synthetical form of preaching even in the evangelical church.

Amongst the homiletetes of the Reformation time, both

for biblical-evangelical spirit and for scientific worth and completeness, the palm is due to the work of the more "reformed" Marburg professor, Andr. Gerb. Hyperius, *De formandis concionibus sacris seu de interpretatione scripturarum populari*, Ll. ii. 1553, and later (lastly 1781, ed. Wagnitz), which makes him even more than Erasmus the *founder of scientific homiletic*. In the first (general) division, after statement of the requirements and work of the preacher, he defines more sharply than had ever been done previously the relation of homiletic to rhetoric. Of its five parts, he says (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio*), it can take the rules for the three middle ones from rhetoric, but the exposition, and still more the directions, for *inventio* of the subject (which was for Hyperius the *crux* of homiletic), must be treated independently by itself. He then describes the essential characteristics of every subject of preaching (*utilis, facilis, necessaria*), and of its form (*brevis, dilucida, ordinata*); then the different genera of preaching (most simply according to 2 Tim. iii. 16 and Rom. xv. 4, *doctrina, redargutio, institutio, correctio, consolatio*, and, therefore, a *genus mixtum*), and finally, the particular parts of the sermon (*exordium, divisio, propositio, confirmatio, confutatio, conclusio*), and their effective oratorical execution. The second (special) division then gives the application of the art of preaching, and shows, by many examples, to which of these genera a particular passage of Scripture belongs, and how the material for it may be developed from the individual verses. His *Topica Theologica*, 1561, and later (not prepared for the press by himself), gives still further hints about *inventio* of homiletical matter under the application of the rules of dialectic to the doctrines of faith (see Steinmeyer, *Topik*, S. 12 ff.).

With the prevalence of the barren controversial theology, the influence of the pacific Hyperius decreased, alas, too much. We do not find the ever-increasing

number of homiletes from this time on, following him and his practical popular treatment, but, supported by Melancthon's "rhetoric," striving after a more and more *artificial cultivation of the synthetical method, and thus an ossification of homiletic*. Even the golden homiletical directions scattered through Luther's works, which Konr. Porta (*Pastorale Lutheri*, 1586) and others collected (see Lentz, ii. S. 3; Waleh, *Sammlung kleiner Schriften von der gottgefälligen Art zu predigen*, 1746; Jonas, *Die Kanzelberedsamkeit Luther's*, 1852), fall into the background with the times. Dav. Chyträus (*Præcepta rhetoricæ inventionis*, 1558), M. Chemnitz (*Methodus concionandi*, 1583), Hier. Weller (*De modo et ratione concionandi*, 1562), adhere closely, indeed, to Luther and Melancthon, but are far from reaching the scientific height of Hyperius. In the case of Weller, purely formal rules already prevail, taken from general rhetoric, with its genus demonstrativum, deliberativum, and judiciale, and transferred to the six parts of the sermon. The prolix *Pastoralunterrichtung* of Nik. Hemming, 1566, gives, indeed, in Part iv. directions for the matter of the sermon, and urges the right orthotomy of the Word, but only from the pastoral standpoint. The *Methodus concionandi* of Paneradius, 1574, with its distinction of "textual and thematic" preaching (analytical and synthetical; and, therefore, "methodus Paneradiana" = synthetica), stands like a finger-post, with one arm pointing timidly back to Luther, but with the other pointing hopefully forward to the new scholasticism. And the general current follows the latter way. In vain Luk. Osiander (*Ratio concionandi*, 1584) and Jak. Andreü (*Methodus concionandi*, 1595) exhort to more scripturality and intelligibility of expression and edification in the choice of subjects: the pulpit roars with continual attacks of theological pugilists and inquisitors on new and old departures from "the pure doctrine," in most unintelligible phraseology and learned quotations. Moreover, the prevailing compulsion of the lectionary was an inducement for

the pride of the learned to show its logical skill on the fixed subject, especially by artificial schematising.

Thus, then, at the *beginning of the seventeenth century*, especially in the German Lutheran churches, homiletic shrivels into a *purely formal teaching of methods*. It becomes "methodus concionandi," exhausting its art in the devising of ever new methods of preaching, mechanising more and more the whole work of preaching, and reducing the structure of sermons partly to the pedantically trivial, and partly to the monstrous. From the quadruplex *Meth. conc.* of a Schleupner, 1610 (heroica; Luther's textualis, articulata; explaining word for word, thematica), the number of methods is increased by homiletēs like Rebhan, Förster, Olearius, etc., till Carpzov (*Hodegeticum concionatorium*, 1656) brings them up to a hundred! Later, a Val. Löscher, the temperate opponent of pietism, contents himself again with twenty-five (see them enumerated in Schuler, i. S. 180 ff.; Lentz, ii. S. 144 ff.). The Scripture text becomes "a waxen nose, which everyone may place where he likes" (Schuler). Many of these triflings teach only the dreary art of rhetorical amplification. According to the Leipzig method, the introduction extends to three exordia (two of these with thema and introduction!); that of Helmstadt omits the exordium generale; Jena and Königsberg again are different. A Hülsemann (*Meth. conc.*, 1625) advises the deduction of the same theme the whole year through from every lesson, and in the case of many these "real" yearly courses soon become the custom along with the "verbal." If the application of the exposition was previously attended to, now it becomes a special artificial conclusion: the fivefold practical application (usus didascalicus, elenchticus, paedenticus, epanorthoticus, and paracleticus, according to 2 Tim. iii. 16) is strongly emphasised. All is form; little trouble is taken to produce the sources of edifying *matter*. Luther and Hyperius are thus forgotten. Something of considerably greater utility was provided in their *Meth. conc.* by Ang.

Humius, 1607; Christ. Chemnitz, 1658; and Göbel, 1678; but especially by Balduin, who pursues a more biblical tendency, and constructs his *Brevis institutio ministr. verbi*, 1621, chiefly from the pastoral epistles. Less artificial matter is also found in some Reformed homiletes, as Zepper, Keekermann, with his much-used *Rhetorica ecclesiastica* (*Opp.* 1614), Am. Polanus, *Institutiones de concionum sacr. methodo*, 1604, and others.

(β) *The beginning of the emancipation of Homiletic from Rhetoric and technical form by Pietism and the philosophical reaction* (1700–1830).—An inward change from “all the technica and oratoria praecepta” to the emphasising of the “realia” of the faith, from the “artificialibus” to biblical simplicity, from learned ostentation to sober exposition of Scripture, from the stiff fivefold “practical application” to the edifying character of the whole sermon, begins first with Spener (see his *Theologische Bedenken*, Bd. iv.; his *Homiletischen Vorschriften* in Waleh, ut supra; and Harnack, S. 136 ff.) and Pietism. The special name “homiletic,” now appearing (in Baier, Krumholz, and others), must have involuntarily assisted the effort for its delivery from the bonds of rhetoric and formal method, by a scriptural change in the whole conception of the nature and scope of preaching. Already Joach. Lange founds the new practice of preaching by a new theory, by his rather self-conscious work, *Oratoria sacra ab artis homileticae vanitate repurgata*, 1707: cf. also his work, *De concionum mensura*, 1729, and *De concionis forma ad aedificationis scopum accuratius componenda*, 1730; also Paul Anton’s *Elementa homiletica*. Before them Hochstetter in Tübingen, in his *Commentariolus de recta concionandi ratione*, 1701 (4 Aufl. by Sartorius, 1866), had already sketched homiletic in a spirit akin to that of Spener. But the most important homiletic of this tendency, and still useful in our time, though already betraying the influence of Wolff’s philosophical method, is Rambach’s *Erläuterung über die praecepta Homiletica* (ed. Fresenius,

1736, 1746, and frequently after), which in its principles (emphasising of the *habilitas supernaturalis, unctio Spiritus*, and prayer) breathes the spirit of Spener (see inscription under the frontispiece: "Three features should be found in the true teacher: fervent prayer, then diligent meditation, and steadfast conduct in temptation"), just as in the form it shows his cumbrous and wearisome verbosity, and at the same time overcomes the unnaturalness of the mere sticklers for form by a simple, concise, and comprehensive statement (exordium, with rejection of the double form, *electio textus*, *meditatio*, *expositio*, *applicatio*, *conclusio*). Akin to him is Walch's *Gottgefällige Vorbereitung auf die Predigt*, 1733, whilst Hallbauer's *Verbesserte deutsche Oratorie*, 1728, and *Unterricht, Erbaulich zu predigen*, 1737, attack the "homiletical pedantry" from the standpoint of common sense.

Contemporaneously, also, in the *Reformed Church outside Germany*, powerful voices called for the purification and renewal of the taste in preaching. E. Gaussen, professor in Saumur, had in 1678, in his *De ratione concionandi*, already emphasised the subjective qualifications of the preacher, a spirit of repose in God, and knowledge of one's own natural oratorical gifts as the chief matter. Jean Claude, Protestant pastor at Nimes (*d.* 1687), in his *Traité de la composition d'un sermon*, 1688, and frequently (see his *Œuvres posthumes*, t. i.; Vinet, *Hist. de la predicat. parmi les réformés de France au xvii. siècle*, p. 344 ff., and very often in English translation), makes so successful a first attempt at a *French* reformed homiletic, although it treats only of the directly technical, and assumes the fundamental principle, that this book is still used in England as a text-book before all others. In Holland the scholastic (but chiefly analytical) mode of preaching inaugurated by G. Voetius was gradually replaced by a more biblical and more living ethical method under the influence of Cocceian homiletes, such as van Til, van den Honert, and others (for further particulars see Oosterzee,

S. 178 ff.). Vitringa's *Animadversiones ad methodum homiliarium cœlesiast.* 1712, rejecting the synthetical form, had emphasised preaching as the exposition of Scripture, and were much followed, whilst in England the dry pulpit scholasticism of the seventeenth century was turned by Tillotson, Doddridge, Isaac Watts, and others into paths of more taste and feeling. The first-named of these also exercised, through Mosheim, an influence upon the cultured circles of Germany.

Here the Pietistic school, by its one-sided treatment of its favourite topics of repentance and the new birth, soon showed itself exposed to the danger of pining away. Besides, in its delight at the restoration of the soteriological and ethical contents of the gospel after the hypercultivation of form, it fell into a slovenly neglect of it, and this at a time when the showy orators under Louis XIV. had, with the most delicate appreciation of forms, restored most successfully the classical eloquence of the ancient Greek Church, and had set for modern Catholic preaching model examples of perfect rhetoric. Partly as a *reaction* against that narrowness in material, and this laxity in form of the pietistic preaching, a *new tendency* in the battle of orthodoxy with it now appears, before the middle of the eighteenth century, which surpasses both combatants in influence, and gives a new direction to both preaching and homiletic, first on the formal, but then also on the material side—namely, *philosophy*. The controversy about the *theologia irregeneratorum* changes from the time of Reinbeck (*Evangelische Redekunst*, 1732) to the question about the justifiableness of philosophy in the pulpit along with the Bible. Instead of the merely practical peroration, the time demands again a stricter methodical and logical preaching (see Reinbeck, *Grundriss einer Lehrart, ordentlich und erbaulich zu predigen*, 1740, and the *Prussian Cabinet-Orders*, 1739). Soon in many pulpits, after the method of the Wolff philosophy, demonstrating everything in accordance with rules, there is introduced also the most self-evident idea of

a schoolmaster-like definition. In vain Oporin (*Die alte [biblische] und einzige Richtschnur, überzeugend zu predigen*, 1736) and G. F. Meier (*Gedanken vom philosophischen Predigen*, 1754) resist the new mode of preaching. Even Mosheim's (*Anweisung, erbaulich zu predigen*, ed. Windheim, 1763) emphasis on the historical proof of the truth of Christianity from its results, shows, with all the apologetic tendency of his preaching in opposition to the English and French unbelief already prevailing here, a preponderance of the view, according to which the gospel is, from this time forward, regarded more as illumination of the intellect, than as the divine vital power. From that time the bridge to *rationalism* has been built. Even the pious Fénelon—whose pleasant dialogues, *Sur l'Eloquence*, 1718 (German translation by Schaul, 1809) and *Réflexions sur la rhétorique*, 1717, show how difficult it is for Roman Catholic homiletic to free itself from the basis of the ancient rhetoric, and how easily, notwithstanding all its pointing to scriptural oratory as the model, it often treats the Scripture text quite casually—had stated as *La plus essentielle qualite d'un prédicateur : d'être instructif!*

In the *second half of the eighteenth century* the new philosophical style of preaching eats deeper and deeper at the substance of the faith also. Progress in form becomes a retrogression in substance. The popular philosophy of the *Illumination* no longer seeks, like Mosheim's tendency, to confirm faith by demonstration, but by "correct ideas," *i.e.* by destruction of all preconceived opinions, especially of belief in the supernatural, in miracles, to help men to earthly happiness. It seeks no longer to convert, but only to teach. Instead of scriptural proof it wants proofs for the intellect—"rational thoughts." The exposition of Scripture becomes an imposition<sup>1</sup> into the text of the prevailing ideas of the time, and the art of preaching consists in so mishandling the text that it is always according to the will of the preacher. Instead of preparation for the

<sup>1</sup> "Die Schriftauslegung wird zur Einlegung." [Trans.]



world to come the pulpit is used for explanation of the present. Spalding seeks to justify the utility of the preacher's office (in his *Nutzbarkeit des Predigtamts*, 1772, 3 Aufl. 1791) by its co-operation in furthering common morality and social happiness; whatever does not serve this practical end is banished from preaching. Similarly Steinbart, *Anweisung zur Amtsbereitsamkeit christlicher Lehrer unter einem aufgeklärten Volk*, 2 Aufl. 1784, and the manuals of Seiler, Bahrddt, G. E. Meyer, Teller, Gruner, J. P. Miller, and others (see Otto, i. S. 185). Not what Christ once taught, but what he *would now* teach, should, according to Marezoll (*Bestimmung des Kanzelredners*, 1793), be the subject-matter of preaching. From the self-contented, and therefore miserable, morality of this practical eudæmonism it was only a short step to the lowest level of Protestant preaching and homiletic, which is reached by the preachers on health and the potato-preachers,<sup>1</sup> with their popular directions on rational agriculture, etc. Töllner, by his insisting on the treatment of natural subjects in preaching (1770), had prepared the way for this saddest branch of rationalism (see Sack, *Geschichte der Predigt von Mosheim bis Menken*, S. 232 ff.; Nikolai, *Sebald Nothanker*, 1773; the *Journal für Prediger*, 1770 ff., and *Die allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*). The aphoristic, but very admirable maxims for preaching, written by believing theologians, Bengel (*Life*, by Burk, S. 82 ff.), Oetinger (*Etwas Ganzes vom Evangelio*, 1739 and 1761), Phil. Dav. Burk (*Sammlung zur Pastoraltheologie*, 1771, 1867, S. 13 ff.), and their protests against the assumptions of reason, are for a long time but little regarded.

Towards the end of the century the growing influence of the *Kantian philosophy*, with its moral exposition of Scripture, combats, indeed, that wretched eudæmonism and utilitarianism, and justly insists on conviction rather than mere persuasion; but the homilists of this school, in their

<sup>1</sup> "Kartoffelprediger." [Trans.]

attempts at popularising Kant's philosophy, general teaching of religion, and philosophical moralism, only get the length of somewhat deep psychological inquiries, but do not reach the knowledge of the Christian message of salvation. To this class belongs J. W. Schmid's somewhat better *Anleitung zum populären Kanzelrortrag*, 1789, 3 Aufl. 1797 (mentioned above); but especially Schuderoff, *Versuch einer Kritik der Homiletik*, 1797, which vindicates indeed for preaching the character of a religious, but not necessarily of a Christian (!) discourse, and Wegscheider's *Versuch, die Hauptsätze der philosophischen Religionslehre in Predigten darzustellen*, 1801.

A change from the emphasis laid on the philosophical matter of preaching to a predominating *effort after more artificial perfection of form*, begins again with Reinhard. His strict logical correctness in delicately arranged division, in which the text seems really only to exist for the sake of the division, while its evangelical meaning gets but little of its rights, penetrates into his theory. Cf. his maxims for preaching in his *Geständnissen, seine Predigt und Bildung zum Prediger betreffend*, 2 Aufl. 1811. Through his and Ernesti's recommendation of classical literature we see homiletic for some time longer constructing its principles in purely *formal* manner partly out of *logic*, and partly out of *rhetoric*, in Grotefend, Thym, *Historisch-kritisches Lehrbuch der Homiletik*, 1800; Thiess, *Anleitung zur Amtsberedsamkeit*, 1801; Tittman, *Homiletik*, 1804; Cannabich, Dahl, Kaiser, *Geistliche Rhetorik*, 1816; K. G. Bauer, Crome, *Vervollkommnung der geistlichen Beredsamkeit durch das Studium der Klassiker*, 1825. All these, as well as those who treat homiletic in pastoral theology or in the science of the spiritual calling,—such as Gräffe's *Pastoraltheologie*, 1803; Köster's *Pastoralwissenschaft*, 1827; Hüffel's *Wesen und Beruf des evangelischen Geistlichen*, 1822, 4 Aufl. 1843, for a long time much used: and Niemeyer's *Handbuch für christliche Religionslehrer*, ii. Teil (homiletic, catechetical, etc.), 6 Aufl. 1827; Danz, *Grundriss der Wissenschaft des geist-*

*lichen Berufs*, 1824; Haas, *Der geistliche Beruf*, 1834,—are surpassed by Schott, *Kurzer Entwurf einer Theorie der Beredsamkeit*, 1807, 1815, and more detailed, *Theorie der Beredsamkeit mit besonderer Anwendung auf die geistliche Beredsamkeit in ihrem ganzen Umfang*, 3 Teile, 2 Aufl. 1828—1832, the only too elaborate and rich in illustrations, though not very original, *magnum opus* of this school, whose conception of homiletic as a species of general rhetoric is indicated even by the title (see above, sec. 2). Closely akin to him is Ammon, *Ideen zur Verbesserung der herrschenden Predigtmethode*, 1795, and *Anleitung zur Kanzelberedsamkeit*, 3 Aufl. 1826.

Thus, toward the end of this period, the scarcely attained position of homiletic as an independent science threatens to be lost again. By emphasising the specifically *Christian subject* of preaching, Pietism had begun to assert the right of homiletic to independent treatment. By the pietistic neglect of form, and by the damage to the subject-matter through deistical “illumination” and philosophical moralism, it is again threatened on its formal side with the old absorption by rhetoric, since even its own name “homiletic,” which had scarcely begun to be conceded, was for a while lost again; it became only “pulpit-” or “professional oratory.” On the same line, but of a deeper grasp ethically, is Theremin’s clever work, *Die Beredsamkeit, eine Tugend*, 1814 and 1837, in which, indeed, he treats homiletic as quite within the elements of rhetoric in general, and erroneously derives the origin, the ideas (duty—virtue—happiness), the active force of both Christian and secular oratory from one and the same source; but, on the other hand, makes its operation no longer dependent on external art, but on the energetic, moral conviction of the speaker and the internal truth of the discourse. Similarly, but emphasising instead of the classical-rhetorical form rather the popular character of the discourses of Christ as the ideal model: Klein, *Die Beredsamkeit des Geistlichen als eine Nachfolge Christi*, 1818.

(γ) *Modern Homiletic and its incorporation in the system of Practical Theology.*—A real renewal of the science of preaching (as well as of preaching itself) could neither be attained by attempts at improving its formal treatment nor by a stricter emphasis on the ethical habitus of the speaker, but only by a recognition above all else of the *biblical-evangelical basis*, so far as the subject matter of preaching is concerned, and at the same time of *the edifying* (and awakening) *aim of Church and worship* as determining its *form and direction*. And this has been generally the step by which both its independence in relation to rhetoric and its aim of edifying the Church have been in some degree secured. In this step also, which is especially connected with the names of Claus Harms and Schleiermacher, we see, as always, the beginning of a better practice co-operating for the regeneration of the theory, and then the renewed theory assisting in a general improvement of the practice.

We next meet with a *vigorous opposition to the previous mistakes and perversions*. After Marheinecke (*Grundlegung der Homiletik*, 1811), starting with the idea of priesthood and atonement, had attacked the banishment from the pulpit of the central dogmas of Christianity and the “empty formal tone” of an abstract and yet only apparently scientific act of persuasion, and had pointed to the fact that religious rhetoric is conditioned by its aim of Christian culture and edification, Claus Harms, with his fresh, living, and vigorous originality, declared war on pedantic, artificial preaching, by a fearless assertion of the right of individual freedom from form, even to the absence of rules. His treatise on “Speaking with Tongues” (“Mit Zungen Reden”: *Studien und Kritiken*, 1833, 3 H.) fell like a bomb among the study lamps of those who were still laboriously working after the logical-rhetorical model. At the same time, by a clear definition of the different provinces of the pastoral office (like the writers on pastoral theology above-named), he incorporates homiletic with

practical theology, which, indeed, he still calls *Pastoral Theology* (1834, 1878), and in the first part of which (*The Preacher*), starting from a healthy, biblical-ecclesiastical view, he gives in free, but unusually suggestive statement, a lasting abundance of hints and suggestions, experimental and true to life. Cf. also Erdmann's treatise, "Wie soll die Predigt beschaffen sein?" (*Studien und Kritiken*, 1834, 3 H.), and J. Müller's *Über die gewöhnlichen Mängel der Predigt als blosser Kanzelvorträge*, 1834.

As Harms vindicated the right of individuality and the duty of fresh, spiritual and biblical popular style, so Schleiermacher (who, both in practice and theory, asserted above all the element of Church fellowship, the unity of the religious consciousness between preacher and congregation) permanently vindicates again the character and edifying aim of preaching as pertaining to the worship of the Church. By defining the object of *practical theology* as the science of *Church* life, and treating it as such (instead of the previous science of the pastoral or clerical profession), by the essential grouping together and systematic division of the individual branches of practical theology, he and Marheinecke (whose *Entwurf der praktischen Theologie*, 1837, is the first perfectly completed practical theology) assigned to homiletic *the sure and independent scientific place in the system of practical theology*, in which it still produces fruit; see his *Darstellung des theologischen Studiums*, 1811, 1830, and in his *Praktische Theologie* (ed. Frerichs, 1850), the "Theorie der religiösen Rede." Individual writers who continued the rationalistic and Reinhardian views of preaching, such as Alt (*Anleitung zur Kirchlichen Beredsamkeit*, 1840) and Ziegler (*Fundamentum dividendi*, 1851), could henceforth only appear as stragglers.

From the Hegelian schematism of Marheinecke, and the defective exegesis of Schleiermacher, it can be understood that others fetched *from Scripture* the foundation-stones for a reconstruction of homiletic, and in general went back from the devotional, edifying character of

preaching, which had been one-sidedly made prominent, to the general aim of founding and furthering the kingdom of God, and carried this to the length of attempting to secure the independence of Homiletic by more pregnant *biblical titles*. So especially Stier, *Grundriss einer biblischen Keryktik, oder Anweisung, durch das Wort Gottes sich zur Predigtkunst zu bilden*, 1830 and 1844, who here distinguishes biblical, missionary, and Church keryktik, urges with perfect justice and great emphasis the biblical purification of pulpit speech (S. 175 ff.), but pushes his anti-rhetorical zeal now and then to an extreme. Sichel, *Grundriss der christlichen Halieutik, oder auf Psychologie und Bibel gegründete Anweisung, durch Predigt den Menschen für das Reich Gottes zu gewinnen*, 1829, partly belongs to this class also. He treats the former part as "Epagogik"; and the distinctively halieutic<sup>1</sup> part according to the psychological distinctions of imagination, feeling, and volition.

Partly pursuing these tendencies more into detail, partly, especially, seeking to avoid the dangers of their one-sidedness by supplying and reconciling the complementary aspects; along with the determination of the matter and form of preaching by Scripture and the Church, as well as the devotional aim, emphasising now more, now less, the harmony of preaching with the Confession; sometimes confidently affirming, sometimes anxiously denying the rhetorical element in it, but holding fast, all through, the independence of the science of preaching as a practical theological study in relation to rhetoric, we now come to *the homiletic of to-day*, which we may date from Palmer's *Evangelische Homiletik*, 1842 (6 Aufl. 1886). Notwithstanding its defective conception of the aim of preaching and its questionable division, it has responded in a truly praiseworthy manner, following up the line of Stier in a Church-spirit, influenced by Schleiermacher, by sound judgment and evangelical charity, by a clear, flowing state-

<sup>1</sup> "Halieutic," *vide supra*, pp. 4, 5. [Trans.]

ment and completeness, more free than strictly scientific, and especially by rich illustration of details and admirably chosen examples—to the anti-rationalistic, biblical, and Church requirements of the time, and has therefore circulated more than all others among the living generation of German preachers. In some respects correcting Palmer, but like him richly enlarging on the Church determination of preaching (arrangement of the Church year), and also emphasising in a thoroughly moderate fashion its conformity to the Confession, Ficker's *Grundlinien der evangelischen Homiletik* followed in 1847.

Following Schleiermacher more closely than Palmer, and, in a critical spirit, further improving the master's suggestions, is Schweizer's *Homiletik der evangelisch-protestantischen Kirche*, 1848. Strictly and entirely assuming the devotional character of homiletical work, and emphasising along with this (in contrast with Palmer) the oratorical determination of preaching, constantly compelled to supplement the one-sidedness of his fundamental conceptions, after stating the devotional theory, he divides homiletic clearly and comprehensively into essential, material, and formal, and executes the whole in thoroughly scientific fashion, dividing almost too much into the smallest details and without illustrations. Since then we frequently find homiletic, especially on the reformed side, treated *in close connection with Liturgies*; so in Ebrard, *Vorlesungen über praktische Theologie*, 1854; Hagenbach, *Grundlage der Liturgik und Homiletik*, 1863, in which the latter (homiletic) is entirely included in the *Theorie des Kultus*, and with special reference to "special Liturgies"; and more fully in Henke's *Posthumous Vorlesungen über Liturgik und Homiletik*, ed. Zschimmer, 1876. We see homiletic more closely connected with catechetical as the "service of the Word" in Nitzsch's excellent *Praktische Theologie*, ii. 2, 1, 1848 and 1860, which not only marks an epoch for that science in general by its strictly systematic and more complete construction, but also,

with its delicate tact in relation to Church matters, its penetrating, suggestive, and often too bare statement, and simple, appropriate division (meaning and aim of preaching, determination of the subject, arrangement, execution, homiletical language, delivery), still marks one of the highest points in the homiletic of to-day. See the same churchly and theological standpoint and a similar treatment of homiletic, with carefully prepared lists of literature on the subject, in Otto's *Erangelisch-praktische Theologie*, i. 1869. A somewhat richer treatment also of the history of preaching and homiletic in a readable sketch is G. Baur's *Grundzüge der Homiletik*, 1848. Closely agreeing with Nitzsch in its conception of the relation between rhetoric and homiletic, but at the same time going its own way in original and highly admirable fashion, is Vinet's *Homiletique*, 1853 (German by J. Schmid, 1857), which divides the whole into selection, arrangement, and execution. Only in Ehrenfeuchter's (incomplete) *Praktische Theologie*, i. 1859, do we find the system of missionary [evangelistic] proclamation developed essentially from the nature of the Church.

Continuing *the biblical line of homilettes*, emphasising preaching as "God's Word to the people," and therefore the Scriptures as entirely determining preaching, is Gaupp's *Homiletik*, 1852 (*Prakt. Theol.* ii. 1), the first part of which treats very thoroughly of the material for preaching of the Old and New Testaments both in history and doctrine, and Beyer's *Das Wesen der christlichen Predigt nach Norm und Urbild der apostolischen* ["The nature of Christian preaching according to the example and model of that of the Apostles"], 1861, which not only energetically defends the scriptural principle of preaching against other tendencies of modern theology, but also forcibly discusses the relation of preaching "as the Word of God" to the people, and the right of individuality in preaching; only in treating of the identity of the gospel message it does not bring out with sufficient clearness the difference be-



tween the later Christian preaching as an exhaustive discourse on a given text and the apostolic proclamation.

Recently Harnack (*Praktische Theologie*, ii. 3, "History and Theory of Preaching," 1878) has published a noteworthy homiletic from the standpoint of the *Lutheran Church*, with original division which seeks to overcome the usual separation of matter and form, painstaking and impartial in its historical judgments, and presenting the results of mature experience (see also his *Idee der Predigt*, 1844); and in the same year van Oosterzee gave us a reformed homiletic (*Praktische Theologie*, i.), with a fuller sketch also of the history of other than German, and especially Dutch, preaching and homiletic. In the year 1883 appeared Krauss's *Lehrbuch der Homiletik*. Like this, following Schleiermacher and Schweizer, but more after the left side, that of the *Protestantenverein*, and of little utility, is Bassermann's *Handbuch der geistlichen Beredsamkeit*, 1885, in its very title ("sacred oratory"), and then also in the whole spirit of its contents going back to the old rationalism. Most recent is Achelis (*Praktische Theologie*, Bd. i. 1890), who follows Nietzsche, and adduces the activities of the Church from the idea of the Church and from its essential characteristics.

*Individual contributions* to homiletic, in addition to those above mentioned, and apart from other handbooks on practical theology (e.g. Moll, *System der Praktischen Theologie in Grundriss*, 1853, and the *Theological Encyclopaedias*, Rosenkranz, 1831; Doedes, 1876, etc.), are:—Dittenberger, *Conspectus introductionis in theol. homil.*, 1836; excellent homiletical hints in Tholuck's *Vorwort zu der Predigt über die Hauptstücke des christlichen Glaubens und Lebens*, 1835, and frequently; Th. Weber, *Betrachtungen über die Predigtweise und geistliche Amtsführung*, 1869; Steinmeyer's thoughtful and refined *Topik im Dienst der Predigt*, 1874, which, however, separates rather too artificially the three genera of preaching; Cremer, *Aufgabe und Bedeutung der Predigt in der gegenwärtigen Krisis*

("Work and Significance of Preaching in the Present Crisis"), 1877; and individual articles in the Church magazines.

*Homiletical magazines*: Zimmermann and Leonhardi, *Gesetz und Zeugniß* ("Law and Testimony"), since 1859; since 1871, under the title, *Pastoralblätter für Homiletik, Katechetik und Seelsorge*; E. Ohly, *Mancherlei Gaben und ein Geist*, 1862 ff.; *Die Predigt der Gegenwart* ("The Preaching of the Present," by Weimar pastors), since 1864; and Marbach, *Die Deutsche Predigt*, only 1873 and 1874 (both of the Protestantenverein). Also Sachsse's (formerly Ohler's) *Magazine of Pastoral Theology*: "Halte, was du hast" ("Hold fast that which thou hast"), 1887 ff.

Of Protestant text-books on preaching, other than German, we may merely mention: Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, 1656 and very frequently (in German, *Der evangelische Geistliche*, 1837 and frequently: more a pastoral work, emphasising personal qualifications with cutting force); Shedd (Presbyterian Professor in New York), *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, 8th ed. 1872; the well-known sensational preacher, H. W. Beecher's *Yale Lectures on Preaching*, 1872 to 1874 (German by Kannegiesser, *Vorträge über des Predigtamt*, 1874), attacking, in original freshness, packed with illustrations, the stiff compulsion of rules. But especially worth reading are Spurgeon's *Lectures to my Students* (German, *Vorlesungen in meinem Predigerseminar*, 1878), full of sound, practical suggestions. 2 Band, 1880, similar.

Further particulars on homiletical literature, outside Germany, in Christlieb's article "Homiletik," in Herzog's *Realencyclopädie*, 2 Aufl.

Of modern *Roman Catholic* homiletic: Sailer's *Pastoral-theologie*, 2 Aufl. 1793, with sensible homiletical hints; especially Hirscher, *Beiträge zur Homiletik und Katechetik*, 1852. Also the handbooks of Zarbl, Lutz, etc. Alban Stolz, *Homiletik als Anweisung den Armen das Evangelium zu predigen* ("Homiletic as instruction how to Preach the gospel to the Poor"), 1885, more popular, for untrained students of theology, than scientific.

#### 4. PLACE OF HOMILETIC WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY.

The peculiar subject and the unique field of practical theology is, as has been settled since the time of Schleiermacher and Nitzsch, the self-informing of the Church about its functions and work as a Church, and *practical theology* is therefore *the theory of the living activities of the Church* for the realisation of the kingdom of God. In the sphere of these activities, homiletic plainly belongs to the teaching of *service of the Word*. In the earlier and, in our opinion, too sharp division—a division which easily becomes unevangelical, and therefore is now (cf. for example Harnack, *Practische Theologie*, i. 55 ff.) more and more discarded—of those activities into Church service and Church discipline, it was incorporated with the former. Moreover, it cannot be disputed that, as the theory of congregational preaching, it belongs to the statement of the self-edifying activity of the Church, and as evangelistic or missionary preaching [“*Missionskeryktik*”], it belongs to the statement of the Church’s self-extending activity. On the other hand, in the scheme of departments of the study of practical theology, *their position and grouping with kindred departments may be somewhat varied*. As a theory of the Church’s living activity for its own edification, it may be more closely connected with the theory of the cure of souls or *pastoral theology* (e.g. in Harnack, and often previously), which states the transference of edification from the sphere of common worship to that of individual life. As a theory of a principal act of worship, it may be connected with the teaching of worship (see above in Hagenbach, Henke, etc.), and as part of the study of the service of the Word, with the Church’s instruction or *Catechetical* (in Hüffel, H. Harms, Nitzsch, etc.).

For our part, we regard practical theology as divided into—(1) *the teaching of principles*, describing the organism of Church life according to its idea and previous realisa-

tion ; (2) *the practical part*, which states the living activities of the Church for its own edification. This we divide into (a) *the Christian life of the Church within* ; (b) *the Christian work of the Church without*. Homiletic, in this view, belongs to the statement of *Christian life*, whose source is partly worship in general, *system of worship* ; and is partly and especially the constant outflow and reception of scriptural truth, *theory and history of preaching* ; whilst the study of *the cure of souls* has to deal with the preservation of this Christian life apart from worship, the study of Church government with its right ordering ; and then in the *Church's work* without, *Catechetical* has to deal with the self-propagation of the Christian institutions of the Church within Christendom itself, while the *science of missions* treats of the self-extension of the Church beyond the bounds of Christendom.

### 5. DIVISION AND CONTENTS.

From early times down to Schweizer, Nitzsch, Henke, Oosterzee, Krauss, Achelis, etc., the distinction between *matter* and *form* of preaching has always been assumed in the division of homiletic, which has therefore been divided into *material* and *formal*, and an *essential* division has been presupposed, as the basis of these, between secular and sacred oratory, idea and scope of preaching, with a survey of the historical aspect of the subject. Achelis, in the essential homiletic, treats of the preacher : (1) the preacher and his office ; (2) the preacher and his people ; (3) the preacher and his preaching. Only Palmer (and similarly Gaupp) thinks that the matter and form of the sermon ought not to be separated, and advances from the Word of God (the preacher in the preacher) to Church custom (the liturgist in the preacher) : and from thence to the people (the pastor in the preacher), within which three concentric circles the personality of the preacher has to move as a fourth factor (6 Aufl. S. 27 ff.). In this plan, under the

head of "Church customs," very diverse elements must indeed be included. Besides, the inseparability of form and matter in the doctrinal statements of holy Scripture does not equally hold good of the rules of human exposition and application of the Word. Harnack divides the constructive part very rhythmically: (1) preaching as a devotional act in speech; (2) preaching as an oratorical act in worship, in which arrangement, however, he must separate the meaning and aim of preaching, and must divide under these two halves, whereas these two cannot be kept far apart.

According to our simple division, a fundamental *first section* has to discuss the *meaning* and nature, scope and *aim* of preaching directly after one another, partly in themselves, partly with reference to modern needs; and then the *second section* treats of the *personal qualifications* for preaching which result therefrom. After this question, as to *Who?* the *third* and most comprehensive *section* treats of the *What?* or the *matter and subject* of preaching, which (*a*) is *divinely given*, presented in the holy Scriptures (the holy Scriptures as the source of homiletical material; choice of texts: homiletical interpretation and application); (*b*) is partly determined by *Church creed and Church custom* (homiletical exposition and the Creed; choice of material according to Church custom; lectionary question; regard for the Church year and festivals); (*c*) is determined by the *present requirements of the congregation* (regard for its internal condition; sermons on special occasions); (*d*) is determined by the *individual personality* of the preacher. Finally, in the *fourth section*, which has to develop the *How?* or the *form of the sermon* (*a*) as to *expression*, (*b*) as to *delivery*, under (*a*) the question as to retention of the thematic form of preaching, the theme and division, then the amplification (from introduction to conclusion) and the diction, and under (*b*) the mastery of the subject, conception and memorising, voice, attitude, and action are naturally grouped together.

As regards Palmer, we will not deny that all kinds of matter and all kinds of form should be in the sermon; for example, even the *thema*. Moreover, the subject is not presented to the preacher in abstracto, but in the Gospels and in the Scriptures generally is cast into a definite form, which cannot be altered without altering the divine substance. On the other hand, theoretically, everything can be treated partly according to its matter, partly according to its form. The question is only as to ideal and theoretical *distinction*, not as to practical *separation*. And our Lord himself, referring to the speeches of His disciples in their own defence, makes a distinction between matter and form:  $\pi\tilde{\omega}\varsigma \tilde{\eta} \tau\acute{\iota} \acute{\alpha}\text{-}\pi\omicron\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\eta}\sigma\eta\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota$  (Luke xii. 11). The sacredly serious, penetrating, simple, deep, terse, bold style of the divine Word must still, indeed, remain as always setting the ideal of preaching (Beck and Stier), but the history of preaching clearly shows that the *one* divine substance may appear in form of manifold variety (compare, for example, Luther with Arndt or Spurgeon, Spener with F. W. Krummacher, Ludw. Harms with Gerok, etc.).

## CHAPTER I.

### MEANING AND NATURE, SCOPE AND AIM OF PREACHING.

#### I. FUNDAMENTAL BIBLICAL CONCEPTION.

##### (a) *Fundamental Biblical Conception of the Meaning and Nature of Preaching.*

THE idea of preaching which rests on the revealed aspect of the divine character, and is therefore peculiar to revealed religion, signifies, according to the original meaning of קָרָא, *κηρύσσειν*, *praedicare* (whence “to preach”), the *public, solemn proclamation*, often with the accessory idea of *praising*. So in the oldest historic traces of a common adoration of God (Gen. iv. 26, xii. 8), where the קָרָא בְּיָמֵי יְהוָה, in addition to *calling on* (*anrufen*) the name of Jehovah, no doubt signifies also the *proclamation* (*ausrufen*) of His grace and help in praise and thankfulness (cf. Ex. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 5, and Ps. cv. 1). Later, it signifies the authoritative call of *God’s messenger* as a herald, who, as *commissioned by God*, and not in his own name (as the false prophets, Jer. xiv. 14, xxiii. 25), proclaims to men the whole government of God, by which He manifests Himself in relation to men as personally present—the whole character of God as revealed to men, *i.e.* His name, as well as His purpose and will (Isa. xl. 6; Jer. ii. 2, vii. 2, viii. 15 ff.; Joel iv. 9, etc.). The revelation of God in word and deed is, however, from the beginning directed to the *salvation* of men; and hence we see the preaching of God, in accordance with its essential

substance and growing with the historical development of the kingdom of God, becoming a *proclamation of the divine thoughts, deeds, and methods of salvation*, and also *glad tidings*; the  $\aleph\gamma\tau$ , in accordance with its essential substance, becomes  $\gamma\psi\tau$  = to bring glad tidings (see Isa. lii. 7, lx. 6; 1 Chron. xvi. 23; Ps. xl. 10, xcvi. 2, etc.), the messages of grace (Isa. xl. 2; Zeph. iii. 9 ff.; Isa. i. 18, etc.). Still more in the New Testament the *κηρύσσειν* becomes *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι* (Matt. x. 7; Mark iii. 14, cf. with Matt. xi. 5; Luke iv. 18, 43, vii. 22, viii. 1, ix. 6, xx. 1; Acts viii. 25, etc.; 1 Cor. i. 17, etc.); hence *κηρύσσειν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* (Matt. iv. 23, ix. 35; Mark i. 14, 15, xiii. 10, xvi. 15, etc.). Along with this aspect there goes, however, in accordance with the ethical character and aim of the divine revelation of salvation, the exposure of human sin, *e.g.* Isa. i. 2 et seq., lviii. 1 (and often elsewhere; cf. already Noah, the preacher of righteousness, 2 Pet. ii. 5); and the *message of judgment* (Isa. vi. 10 ff.; Jer. xviii. 7 ff., xix. 2 ff.; Matt. xxiii., xxiv.; Acts xvii. 31). The latter aspect we see even predominating in the message of many of the prophets with the letter of the law, that kills and condemns (though never as the final aim, but as the means to repentance, to prepare for the coming salvation) in accordance with the whole character of the old covenant as disciplinary and as preparing the way for salvation, whereas after the appearance of salvation in Christ the whole substance of the New Testament message is embraced in the idea "Gospel," and thus gives to Christian preaching for all time to come essentially the character of *glad tidings of salvation*.

In the relationship of Old and New Testament preaching we must not one-sidedly emphasise either their unity or their diversity; not their unity, for it makes an essential difference whether salvation has appeared or not. Till then all preaching must rather *point forward* to the future (hence the predominance of prophetic writing in the Old Testament), and after that, it must rather *point back* to that which has happened for our salvation; till then, it must prepare the



way for the coming salvation by exposure of sin and by awakening a longing for salvation, after that it must rather offer kindly the salvation which has appeared. Hence *in the former the office is that of the letter which killeth, in the latter, of the spirit which giveth life*, the glad tidings: the life has been manifested (1 John i. 2): grace and truth have come to us (John i. 17). This distinction is founded in the law of God's different economies. But this, on the other hand, is not to be exaggerated. Even in the Old Testament the proclamation of salvation is the motive and final aim, to which the message of judgment is subordinated only as the means, or at least as only a provisional, temporary aim. The whole of Old Testament prophecy is full of the three elements: sin, judgment, and salvation. Even in this also it corresponds to New Testament preaching, that it can always point back to the redemptive acts of God which have already taken place. Thus the subject of preaching grows with history and with the new-appearing revelations.

Hence in the prophets the frequent exclamations: Have ye forgotten what He did to your fathers? etc. The last great redemptive act of the old covenant corresponds with the redemption by Christ in the new covenant.

But the *redemption by Christ* is not now one redemptive act of God amongst others, but is the goal of all previous declarations of salvation, the ground and centre of all that follow, in relation to which all previous acts are secondary in importance, and therefore is henceforth the *permanent, ever-valid foundation of all preaching*, and this the more, as it is also the centre and kernel of all God's revelation of truth to men (John xvi. 14). Preaching thus receives for all time the *character of glad tidings of salvation* as its fundamental feature, as already in Christian antiquity *εὐαγγέλιον* in connection with Isa. xl. 9 ("O Zion, that bringest good tidings . . . say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God!") and lx. 6 seq. ("they shall show forth the *praises* of the Lord" —where the LXX uses *εὐαγγέλιον*) signified the message of *Messianic* salvation, as indeed preaching and healing often go together (Mark iii. 14, 15, xvi. 18, 20; Matt. x. 7, 8). And this feature, the proclamation, with praise, of the redemptive acts of God, has proved itself through all time to be the most heart-winning power of preaching, and therefore, also, the keynote of the preacher, with all humility, must still be the joy of one who has good tidings to bring.

As, then, all the redemptive thoughts and acts of God are concentrated and embodied in the *founding of a kingdom of God on earth*, whose first blessing is the forgiveness of sins to be obtained through *μετάνοια*, we see the fundamental character of New Testament preaching at once shaping itself: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," in which Old Testament preaching is completed (John the Baptist), and at the same time passes over into the message of salvation of the new covenant (Matt. iii. 2, iv. 17; Mark i. 14, 15; Luke ix. 2, 6, x. 9, xvi. 16). But as the author and finisher of this kingdom, yes, the source and centre of all revelation of God, is *Jesus Christ* (Col. i. 15-20; Eph. i. 20-23; Heb. i. 1-3), we see the preaching of the kingdom of God, of its nature and development, its demands, and its promises, pass on to the *proclamation of the person, the work, and office of Christ as the Saviour of the world* (Luke iv. 18 ff., xxiv. 27; John i. 17, 18, iii. 16; in the Synoptists the kingdom of God, and in the Gospel of John the Son of God, is the end and centre, see Gess; Acts ii. 22 ff., x. 36 ff., xviii. 5, xxvi. 23, xxviii. 23; Rom. i. 16; 2 Cor. iv. 5; Phil. i. 15; Col. i. 26 ff., etc.). And since, again, the *atonement* and resurrection of Christ, whose fruits—justification from sins, adoption as God's children, and inheritance of everlasting life—are received by *faith alone* through God's free grace (*e.g.* Rom. iii. 24-28; Gal. iii. 13, 26; Eph. i. 7; Heb. ix. 11 ff.), from the climax of His work, the preaching of Christ therefore more particularly shapes itself into the message of *the crucified and risen One* from Acts ii. on (*e.g.* 1 Cor. i. 23, ii. 2, and above), and thus the promise of the kingdom of God takes more definite shape as the offer of the grace and righteousness purchased by Christ; the fundamental condition, *μετανοείτε*, leads to the request, "*Be ye reconciled to God*" (1 Cor. v. 20, 21), or to the one demand which embraces everything, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*" (Acts xvi. 31, xiii. 38, 39), which

henceforth remains the inmost centre-point of all Christian hortatory preaching. This message, however, in order to be understood and accepted in its full sense, requires a more particular explanation: hence we see a *διδάσκειν*, coupled with the *κηρύσσειν* and *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι* (Matt. iv. 23, xi. 1; Luke xx. 1; cf. *γνωρίζειν*, Eph. i. 9, iii. 3). Because, finally, God's ambassadors in Scripture have either directly received from God or seen in visions, as prophets, that which they proclaim, or as apostles of Christ have seen and experienced it in personal intercourse with Him (John i. 14, xix. 35; 1 John i. 1 ff.), or afterwards received it from Him by direct revelation (1 Cor. xi. 23), and must therefore have *experienced in their own hearts* the truth and divine saving power of these revelations (Gal. i. 12; 1 Tim. i. 13, 16; 2 Tim. i. 12; 1 Pet. i. 3, etc.), their preaching is therefore called WITNESSING, *μαρτυρεῖν*, in which their own person and life-history answers for the actual truth of that which they proclaim with all joyfulness (*παρρησία*); cf. already *עֲדָם עֵדִים*, Isa. xliii. 10 ("Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant," in relation to the heathen), cf. Isa. lv. 4. Hence the teachings of Christ were in testimony to that which He had seen (John iii. 11) and had heard from the Father (viii. 28, xv. 15, xvii. 8); hence Christ Himself is called the faithful and true Witness (Rev. i. 5, iii. 14; John xviii. 37: "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth"). Hence the commission, John xv. 27: "*ὑμεῖς μαρτυρεῖτε*, because ye have been with Me from the beginning"; Luke xxiv. 48: *ὑμεῖς ἐστε μάρτυρες τούτων*, and Acts i. 8, ii. 32, 40, iv. 20, xiii. 31, xviii. 5, xxiii. 11; Rev. i. 2; and therefore the chief work of the apostleship was to bear witness of the resurrection of Christ (Acts i. 22, xxii. 15, xxvi. 16; cf. 1 John i. 1-3). In this way the inmost meaning and character of biblical, and especially of Christian preaching, is formed, and the elements of adoring proclamation,

κηρύσσειν and εὐαγγελίζεσθαι of the divine commission, and of διδάσκειν reach together their highest point.

In the words μετανοεῖτε, ἤγγικε γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, which we find in the mouth of the Baptist, as well as of Christ, lies the unifying connection between Old and New Testament preaching, *i.e.* the transition of the former into the latter. With the Baptist the chief stress is still laid on the first half, μετανοεῖτε; with Christ and His disciples it is already laid more on the second, and hence His commission to the disciples (Matt. x. 7; Luke x. 9) only extends to the proclamation of the approaching kingdom. For *the kingdom of God forms the centre-point of the whole teaching of Christ* and His messengers, especially in the Synoptists; to the nature and scope of this kingdom, its development and growth, its claims and aims, to the character and final destiny of its friends and also of its enemies, all their teachings refer.

Thus *preaching advances step by step in concentric circles with the development of the inmost kernel of the divine revelation of salvation.* As in the old covenant, the prophecy of salvation is ever assuming more definite outlines: seed of the woman—Abraham's seed—hero out of Judah—Branch and eternal King out of the stem of David—Son of the virgin—Immanuel, up to the suffering servant of God, on whom the chastisement of our peace is laid, so it is similarly in the New Testament proclamation of salvation. It begins with the *kingdom of God*: this, then, takes even more concrete form as a kingdom to which Christ admits, through forgiveness of sins, and in which He is Lord; the *person of Christ* gradually becomes the central point in the doctrine of the kingdom of God. For every important article of faith is an act of Christ, and every great act of Christ is an article of faith. Not that the more particular description of this kingdom ceased later on: in the nature of the case it must continue to the end; the directions for the perfection of the kingdom increase proportionately towards the end. But in John the person of Christ is all through the end and centre, John vi. 47: "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." From Luke iv. 18 ff. ("the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, for He hath anointed Me," etc.—"To-day is this Scripture fulfilled," etc.—and therefore there in Nazareth hatred already breaks out) to Matt. xi. 27-29 ("All things are delivered unto Me of my Father—come unto Me all ye,"

etc.) this inward progress is noticeable. Whilst, then, *in the beginning only the kingdom of God* was proclaimed, *Christ Himself is afterwards more definitely* preached as the centre-point of salvation; Acts xxviii. 23: "to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus" [Luth.: "and preached to them of Jesus"]. *The general preaching, "Repent," afterwards becomes more definitely that of repentance in the name of Christ*, Luke xxiv. 46, 47: "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead, . . . and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached *in His name*" (cf. Acts x. 43, xiii. 38, 39). The general "gospel" becomes a "gospel of Christ" (Mark i. 1; Rom. i. 16). The forgiveness of sins appears coupled with this name, Acts xiii. 38 (Paul at Antioch): "Be it known unto you that *through this Man* is proclaimed unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified." Moreover, in the life-work, as well as in the doctrine of this Person, the element of propitiatory suffering, death, and resurrection gradually takes the central place, the *sacrificial death of Christ* reveals itself as the great object of His appearance on earth, as that on which ultimately the salvation and life of the world depend: John iii. 14: "As Moses lifted up *the serpent in the wilderness*, even so must the Son of man be lifted up": vi. 51 ff.: "The bread that I will give is My *flesh*, which I *will give for the life of the world*": Matt. xx. 28: "The Son of man is come . . . to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many"—down to the appointment of the *Supper*: "Broken *for you*—shed for you." *In this way the innermost kernel of all revelation of salvation is disclosed*, just as in the fact of the resurrection we have revealed to us the most complete divine security of eternal life, and of salvation from the last enemy—death. Hence the preaching of Christ shapes itself more particularly into the *preaching of the crucified and risen One*: "But we preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. i. 23, etc.), and at the feast of Pentecost: "Jesus of Nazareth . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified . . . whom God hath raised up" (Acts ii. 22 ff.). With this progress in the representation of the object of salvation corresponds also in New Testament preaching the *ethical claims* advanced by it on the conduct of men. In accordance with the ethical character of salvation, which cannot *talis qualis* be at all accepted by men without a change of mind, the fundamental requirement,

μειτῶνεται, *remains fixed for all time*, and the door to the kingdom remains therefore a narrow one: but now, after salvation has been actually secured by Christ, and God and Christ have undertaken the work, the active part, in the redemption of men, only the *receptive side* remains for men. Hence in the demand made now on men the chief emphasis is laid on the request to receive the salvation which has been secured and is ready provided, to appropriate personally, *i.e.* to be willing to accept the perfected redemption and reconciliation, trusting to the free, unmerited grace of God in Christ; and this receptive action which appropriates the grace of Christ, the hand which stretches itself out for the salvation that is brought nigh, the ὄργανον ληπτίμων, is *faith*. Hence the stress now laid in preaching on faith, which includes repentance and every further step, complete and utter self-surrender to the God of salvation, in which *repentance* is in so far made much easier, as besides the claims of the divine law, the representation of the more abounding *love of God*, in Christ and His sacrifice of Himself seeking the lost, must come into the foreground and centre-point.

This subject of preaching, infinitely enriched by the redemptive facts of the New Testament,—yes, now become inexhaustible,—demands, the more briefly and pregnantly it is summed up in the exhortation: “Be ye reconciled,” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” all the more a *fuller explanation*, and hence from the very beginning a διδασκεῖν is combined with the New Testament message of salvation, both by Christ and His apostles. At the same time, this is only an accessory element of the κηρύσσειν and εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, *only a means* to the goal of being understood. *This idea in itself is by no means synonymous with that of preaching*, but is a part, a more or less necessary element within the idea of preaching. Hence the διδασκεῖν is nowhere committed to God’s ambassadors as the peculiar and principal work of their calling, not even in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20 (where it is a means to the end μαθητεύειν). It is therefore a mistake to let preaching spend itself in teaching, unless the Church is to become a school.

It is quite different with the idea of *Witnessing*. This expresses so thoroughly the inmost character of preaching, that, strictly speaking, *it alone secures to preaching its penetrating force and operation*. So also *Ehrenfechter*, S. 142:

“Everywhere in the idea of preaching and its manifold aspects we come upon the element of testimony. Sometimes it is the outward historical testimony, sometimes the inward witness, which takes hold of the heart and conscience.” So also Vinet (see *The Work of Witness-Bearing—Past. Theol.*); Stier, *Missionary Witness-Bearing*, S. 133 ff.; Achelis, S. 314: “The evidential character of preaching is the bearer of the grace and of the Spirit of God;—where testimony is, there God’s acknowledgment is a testimony to it.” It is only as witnesses of God and Christ that we see the preachers in Scripture produce a permanent impression. For the preacher first feels the true *παρρησία* when he only proclaims that which he has himself received directly from God, or heard and seen in Christ.

(b) *Fundamental Biblical Conception of the Aim and Scope of Preaching.*

The divine aim of preaching is therefore no other than a *saving* aim, to make known to the world the way of salvation (John xii. 47; Acts xvi. 17; 1 Cor. i. 21; 1 Tim. i. 15), bringing salvation near to all nations for a witness unto them (Matt. xxiv. 14), with a view to God’s vindication, to invite into the kingdom of God which has come nigh in Christ, or to keep and confirm in it. In the case of some, preaching aims at *awakening*, with a view to change of mind and conversion; in the case of others, at *building-up* in the faith, spiritual advancement. For *the attainment of this aim, the might of the divine word itself* is efficient above all else, since it is not merely a message, but a living, spiritual force (Deut. xxxii. 47; Isa. lv. 11; Jer. xxiii. 29; Heb. iv. 12; John vi. 63; Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 18; cf. 2 Cor. ii. 14–16; 1 Pet. i. 23–25), the Word, which not merely produces a knowledge worthy of remembrance, but touches the conscience, and speaks with divine authority to heart and will, in order to transform and renew them: but to the attainment of this aim belongs also the awakening and edifying power of personal *testimony*, which is the more effective, the greater the measure

of the Holy Ghost in the preacher; hence the equipment of the messengers of God and Christ for their calling as witnesses with the *Spirit of God* (Isa. vi. 5 ff.; Jer. i. 9, v. 14; Ezek. iii. 1 ff.; John xv. 26, 27; Acts i. 8, ii.; 2 Cor. iii. 5 ff.). It is only through this joyful testifying out of personal spiritual experience, through the *παρρησιάζεσθαι* (Acts ii. 29, xiii. 46, xviii. 26, xxvi. 26; Eph. vi. 19), combined with the *ἀπόδειξις πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως* (1 Cor. ii. 4), streaming out of a warmly moved heart, that *the witnessing with words*, *testari*, becomes a *begetting*,<sup>1</sup> *gignere*, *γενῶν* (1 Cor. iv. 15; Philem. 10; cf. Gal. iv. 19; Jas. i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23), a spiritual fructifying and impregnation; and hence the proclamation of salvation to those who are of the truth (John xviii. 37) becomes a *πέθειν*, a convincing and persuading (2 Cor. v. 11; Acts xxvi. 28, cf. xiii. 48), and this, in its successful completion, becomes a *κερδαίνειν* for the kingdom of God (1 Cor. ix. 20, 21).

Hence results the unity as well as the difference in aim and scope between *mission-preaching* on the one hand, and *congregational-preaching* on the other, of which, in the nature of the case, the former predominates in the New Testament.

All God's self-revelation, therefore, also all true preaching, serves a purpose of salvation. By revealing Himself to men, drawing near to them, God wants, step by step, to bind closer the bond of fellowship with them which sin has torn asunder, and to bend again into return to Himself, *i.e.* to life and blessedness, the world's downward, destructive course. Because of Him, so also to Him, are all things (Rom. xi. 36). *The final aim which God has in view for mankind*, is their blessedness and glorification, perfect restoration of His image in them, the most intimate union of God with men. Everything serves this aim and goal from the first educative revelations of God in paradise to the words: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people, and

<sup>1</sup> Wird das Zeugen . . . zu einem Erzeugen. [Trans.]



God Himself shall be with them and be their God" (Rev. xxi. 3). Hence—if, for example, we follow the federal theology—the ever stronger cord of love, which God winds round men in the temporal covenant with Noah, in the covenant of promise with Abraham, the covenant of law with Israel, and the covenant of grace in Christ with the whole world. This reconciliation with God however, now that sin and death have passed upon all men, *is no longer possible, except by the path of holiness* and restoration. Hence every revelation of God serves a saving purpose. But this revelation of God, for the most part, does not reach men directly from God's mouth, but by means of the written Word, especially through the gospel or through preaching. Preaching is therefore entirely subordinate to the divine aim of salvation.

But how is the process of salvation accomplished, which is thus introduced? Answer: By Christ, *by the great provision for salvation in the kingdom founded by Him*, and its means of grace. Hence preaching should partly *invite*—attract—compel into this kingdom, and partly *keep* continually *in it*, keep under the influence of its means of grace, which ever sanctify more and more, purify, and lead toward perfection the inner man. Its aim is therefore a double one, directed towards calling and keeping, *conversion*, and *edification*; partly extension—partly confirmation. For the former, missionary or evangelistic preaching is specially suited; for the latter, congregational preaching. *This twofold aim, however, is in its inmost root, only one, namely, an aim of salvation*, an aim of deliverance and sanctification. Just as little as the being of God can be divided, and as certainly as the *aim of creation and of redemption is only one*, so certainly is this true of the aim of preaching. Whether God speaks to us in His Word by warning, entreaty, threatening, punishment, comfort, or promise, He always pursues *one saving aim*: and so also does the preaching of Christ and His messengers! Whether, as must naturally be the predominating method in the early Church, they address themselves to such as for the

first time are to enter the kingdom of God, or exhort those who are already won for it, as our Lord His disciples, or the disciples in their Epistles the Churches already gathered (hence the Epistles fall essentially under the category of congregational preaching), the aim of salvation—calling to grace in Christ and confirmation in it, conversion and sanctification—forms everywhere the centre, the goal of all exhortation.

(a) SCOPE OF MISSION PREACHING.

As formerly the proclamation of the name and will of God, of His acts of revelation in grace and judgment and of His counsels of redemption sought to preserve among the chosen people the light of the purer knowledge of God and the blessing of faithfulness to the covenant with Him (Ex. xxxiv. 5-7; Jer. xxxv. 15; Jos. i. 8, xxiv.), so now, after the fulness of the time has come, the preaching of the revelation of God in Christ is to aim at leading back the *whole* human race to the true knowledge and fellowship of God, and thereby glorify the name of God as Father, Son, and Spirit, to impress upon the mind and will of all nations his divine acts of redemption and purposes of peace in Christ, and thus to move to *change of mind* and *conversion*, to lead back to life and blessedness the world which has fallen away from him and gone to destruction (Jer. xxxi. 31-34; Isa. xi. 9; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Luke i. 77; Luke xxiv. 47; John x. 16; Acts iii. 26; 1 John i. 3). The preaching of the gospel is therefore *to bring the kingdom of God near to all nations* for a testimony unto them, and to encourage them to enter it by baptism, to partake in all the riches of its grace and its promises by the way of repentance and faith (Matt. xxiv. 14; Mark i. 14, 15; xvi. 15, 16; Acts xvii. 30, 31; Rom. xvi. 25, 26, etc.).

Through the knowledge of God to the knowledge of self and sin, through the knowledge of sin and repentance to the *desire for salvation*, through the desire for salvation to *faith*

and thus to *acceptance of salvation*: these are the recognised stages on the way of salvation, to which God wants, step by step, to lead men through preaching. God therefore wants above all else to preserve and extend through preaching the *true knowledge of Himself*. So in that remarkable passage where God Himself preaches about His own name, the "*Lord's Prayer*" of the Old Testament, where He shows how He is to be addressed, and discloses the inmost saving purpose of the law, Ex. xxxiv.: "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," etc. This knowledge most of all *throws man back upon himself*: the sight of the grace and faithfulness of God, of the love of God, as shown especially in Christ, drives him involuntarily to compare himself, his own heart and life, with this love towards him; then he becomes ashamed of himself as in God's sight; he reaches the knowledge of sin, change of mind, repentance and conversion; he sees how he had gone the wrong way, and walks in the Spirit step by step back again: he turns round, is converted (צַדִּיק, ἐπιστρέφειν). Hence the knowledge of God, whose name is as ointment poured forth, and which leads to all the further stages, can often be described in Scripture as the chief aim of preaching: "They shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord," and this, too, in the time of which He says "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah" (Jer. xxx.): "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi.). This includes already perfect *fellowship with God*, which is elsewhere described as the aim of preaching: "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you"—for what purpose?—"that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i.). Elsewhere *salvation* is represented as the aim of preaching and, generally, of the coming of Christ: "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John xii. 47); "I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John x. 10, etc.); or 1 Cor. i. 21: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"; and sometimes also it is the means and the way thereto, *repentance* and faith that are thus represented: "I come . . . to call sinners to repentance" (Luke v. 32).

But preaching, as it is directed toward the salvation of men, has also in view the *glorification of the divine name*. Both go hand in hand, for it is in the accomplishment of his purposes of salvation that God is most of all glorified. If the kingdom of God comes and grows, the salvation of men and the glory of God are both advanced. But the glorification of God by the preaching of His name and His works of redemption is in itself a *sufficient aim*; for God's glory is proclaimed even where there is no sin to heal, and consequently no salvation is necessary (Ps. ciii. 20). God owes it to Himself and His majesty to make known the holy depths of His character. As this is the *aim and goal* of all *revelation by works* from the creation to the end of the world, so also it is the aim of revelation in the Word, and therefore in preaching. Moreover, this aim *remains* permanently for preaching, *even if, through man's fault, the aim of salvation is not attained*. Even if the gospel is not accepted, it must still be proclaimed *for a witness unto all nations* (Matt. xxiv. 14). This must even happen where the preaching will presumably have no result, for God's vindication in the day of judgment; only then have they no excuse, if salvation was brought nigh to them—a comfort for times in which the great proportion even of professing Church members do not really accept the Word and cleave to the worldly life! Both the *aim of salvation* in regard to men and the *aim of glorifying the divine name* are, however, again united, if the extension of God's kingdom be considered as the aim of preaching. The proclamation of the latter tends to promote both.

But how is this aim, the knowledge of God, the knowledge and acceptance of salvation, attained,—how is *the effect of repentance and faith produced in the hearer*? *The secret of success in preaching*, which we shall afterwards more particularly discuss, lies, according to the biblical fundamental conception, above all else in the *power of the divine word itself*. Because God himself is life, all that proceeds from Him is *also life-producing* and life-preserving. Thus

a creative force dwells especially in His Word, from the first "Let there be light" to "Behold, I make all things new"—and this, too, both physical and spiritual. It is in itself a *vital force*, a seed of life (1 Pet. i. 23), and this life manifests itself always and everywhere by an authoritative touching of the conscience; it becomes a saviour—either of life unto life or of death unto death (2 Cor. ii. 14–16); it leads either to salvation or to hardening (Isa. vi. 10). Hence the promise: "It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. lv. 11). Deut. xxxii. 46, 47: "This law . . . is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life"; Heb. iv. 12: "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword"; 1 Cor. i. 18: "The preaching of the cross is . . . unto us who are saved the power of God"; Rom. i. 16: "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation." This is especially true of the words of Christ: "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John vi. 63). And such they have proved themselves to be all through history, and are still proving. Like the Apostles and Reformers ("Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn!"), so every preacher, with regard to results, must never build his hope on himself, but above all on the power of God's Word!

But this word flows through a *human channel* which can make it intelligible and impressive, or can make it dull and water it. It is essential therefore, for the attainment of the aim of preaching, that God should prepare His servants to be serviceable channels: the anointing of prophets and apostles with *the Holy Spirit*. Thus the Word of God, at first strange to them, becomes *their own possession, their experience*; they are now able to bear witness ("Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me," Acts i. 8). It is this personal experience that first gives the true *joyfulness*, *παρρησία*, and the Spirit-filled

and Spirit-supported joy *works with kindling* effect upon the hearers. It is only when they perceive that the speaker has placed his whole personal life on the side to which he invites that they are taken hold of. On the one hand, they feel themselves related as men to a man with a similar task, similar aim, and similar needs; and on the other hand, they recognise in him the divine messenger and the higher platform to which he has already attained, and this has an attractive power—thus there arises testimony and conviction, winning for the kingdom repentance, faith. Hence Paul says of himself (2 Cor. v. 11): *ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν*—but as *εἰδότες τὸν φόβον τοῦ Κυρίου*, those who have inwardly laid themselves quite bare before God (*Θεῷ πεφανερώμεθα*), who stood before Him in complete integrity. Hence Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 28) exclaims: *ἐν ὀλίγῳ μὲ πείθεις*, after Paul had been able to say of himself: *παῤῥησιαζόμενος λαλῶ*: hence at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii.) many of the Gentiles believed, because Paul and Barnabas *παῤῥησιασάμενοι εἶπον*. In short, therefore: *The divine power of the Word and of the Spirit*, combined with the *παῤῥησία* of human testimony, make the witnessing with words a *propagation of the divine name*. Thus the divine aim of preaching as mission-preaching is also fulfilled.

(β) SCOPE AND AIM OF CONGREGATIONAL PREACHING.

This also, like mission preaching, is the public witnessing of the salvation which is in Christ with a view to the glory of God, the advancement of His kingdom, and therewith the blessedness of men. Since, namely, not merely is the subject of the truth of salvation an inexhaustible one for our knowledge (John iv. 14: Rom. xi. 33), but affords material for ever fresh experiences,—the obedience to the divine message produced by conversion one to be tested by continuous temptations (Heb. xii. 1–4), and hence the measure of knowledge and experience which has been attained one to be continually enlarged (John xvi. 12, 13;

1 Cor. xiii. 9 et seq.; Col. i. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 18),—preaching must also continue its work even in those who have already been won for the kingdom of God (John xiv.–xvii., and the Apostolic Epistles). In the case of such, the task of preaching, therefore, is this: to encourage and strengthen them in conduct worthy of the gospel, in progress in the grace and knowledge of God and Christ, and in sanctification (Eph. iv. 1 ff.; Phil. i. 27; Col. i. 10 ff., iii.; Rom. xii.; 1 Pet. i. 13 ff.; 2 Cor. viii. 1; Heb. xii. 12–16, etc.), thereby to prepare them more and more to be a holy, priestly people of God (2 Cor. vi. 16–18; 1 Pet. ii. 9–12, v. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 1, 10; Col. iii. 14), a spotless bride of Christ (Eph. v. 27; 2 Cor. xi. 2), and thus to prepare the way for the perfection of God’s kingdom in them (Rev. xix. 6–9, xxi. 2 ff.). Since, moreover, it is only concerned with building on the foundation already laid, the essential task of congregational preaching consists in *ἐποικοδομεῖν*, in *edifying* (1 Cor. iii. 10–14, xiv. 26; Eph. ii. 20–22; Col. ii. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 2, 5). The essence of this edifying, however, does not consist merely in the feeling of deep inward satisfaction, in the conscious enjoyment of the blessing which flows from God’s Word (Palmer, S. 23 ff.), but—if we are not to obliterate the fundamental figure of a rising building (*οἰκοδομῆ*), of the temple of God, of the dwelling of God in the Church, and therefore of the deeper and closer access of the individual into this spiritual fellowship, and of the ever more perfect growth of the whole Church into a temple of God—in the *spiritual progress* of knowledge and apprehension of the truth of salvation, which is attained *through* that inward delight in the Word, through the deeper acquaintance with Christian truth which comes of inward self-surrender to it (cf. also Steinmeyer, S. 63; Henke, S. 59 ff.; Augustin, *De doctr. Christ.*, iv. 12). Hence for the purpose of edification the Word of truth is to be rightly divided (*ὀρθοτομεῖν*, 2 Tim. ii. 15) according to the capacity and requirements of the hearers, *i.e.* it is to be given sometimes as milk,

sometimes as strong food (1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12-14). Both the exoteric appealing aim of mission preaching and the esoteric edifying aim of congregational preaching are included in *μαθητεύειν*, to make disciples (Matt. xxviii. 19).

The necessity for the continuance of preaching within the Church has both negative and positive grounds. The negative ground is this, that the world lieth in wickedness, and is even threatening the life of the Church. Every one who has become a believer is exposed to many temptations and struggles, for which he needs to be constantly strengthened afresh. If we do not let the Word of God dwell richly in us (Col. iii. 16), Christians soon succumb again to the pressure of the power of darkness. What would become of a parish, in which for some years there was never any preaching, and no worship of God held? If, then, the prevention of backsliding is the negative aim of congregational preaching, the fitting and preparing of the people for the perfection of the divine kingdom—in a word, their edification—is the positive.

The idea of edification has been variously understood (Schleiermacher, *Praktische Theologie*, S. 619; Palmer, S. 21 ff.; Nitzsch, S. 55; Harnack, S. 231 ff.; Cremer, *Ueber den biblischen Begriff der Erbauung*, 1863; Krauss, S. 123 ff.; Bassermann, *Zeitschrift für praktische Theologie*, 1882, i.).

Palmer, following the footsteps of Schleiermacher, in accordance with his more æsthetic conception of preaching, makes the essence of edification to consist in "the inward satisfaction with the divine truth, *the feeling of deep inward contentment, the conscious enjoyment of the blessing which flows from God's Word.*" The fundamental idea of *οικοδομή*, the figure of being built upon the apostolic foundation into a spiritual house of God (1 Cor. iii. 10 ff.; Eph. ii. 20 ff.), is thus obliterated, which, notwithstanding the general mode of speech of to-day, ought not to happen. Besides, in this explanation, a *producing cause is confused with the product itself*. By means of this inward satisfaction, and this pleasurable self-surrender, I am edified—it is the way to it, but not the edification itself. But the essential thing in the idea of edification is, and still remains, *intellectual and moral religious progress* (cf. "Erbauung" ["edification"] in Herzog's *Realencyklopädie*).



Harnack, in considering edification, rightly distinguishes between the theoretical (explanation and proof) and the practical aim (movement of the will), in which also the exciting of the affections assists (S. 234 ff.).

Even Nitzsch (S. 55) calls the *expression* "enjoyment" a *very ambiguous one*, and finds fault with Palmer's definition, that it "makes no mention either of conviction by the truth, or of the determinations of the will." This is correct. He whose heart is broken by preaching is edified, but he does not yet enjoy. The aim of preaching is plainly not merely a *delectare*, but also a *movere et flectere* (Nitzsch, S. 44, and Schweizer, S. 160): it is only the union of both that produces homiletical edification.

Augustin: *quid illa duo (doceri et delectari) proderunt, si desit hoc tertium (flecti ut assentiantur)?*

If we here distinguish as twofold the aim of preaching, we must, however—and this should be carefully noted—in the idea of congregational preaching, take the word "*congregation*" in an *ideal sense*, namely, as a body consisting of those who have really become believers, of converted persons. *Only in the case of such is the task at all different from that of mission preaching.* But whether this applies to our *modern congregations*, whether in view of their present state, which is a mixture of converted, awakened, unconverted, and even unbelieving persons, the two tasks should not be united, and congregational preaching and mission preaching go constantly hand in hand, we shall presently see.

### *Result.*

According to the fundamental biblical conception, *preaching* therefore means: *publicly to testify* in the name of God the divine will and purpose, and more particularly *the salvation that is in Christ*, with the view of glorifying the divine name, the advancement of God's kingdom, and therewith the salvation of men. In the idea *κηρύσσειν* the emphasis is laid on the *newness* of the message, in *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι* on the joyful *contents* of this message, which presupposes acts of divine love and provisions of divine grace, and aims at our temporal and eternal blessedness, in *διδάσκειν* on the more particular *explanatory statement*

of it; whilst in *μαρτυρεῖν* all these elements are embraced, and the emphasis is laid on the personal *security for the certain truth and reality* of that which is proclaimed. The chief features in the (New Testament) idea of preaching are accordingly:—

- With respect to *source* and *authority*: it takes place *in the name and by the commission of Christ*;
- With respect to *subject*: it must proclaim the salvation which has appeared in the person and work of Christ, and offer it to the acceptance of the world, and must therefore be a *message of salvation*;
- With respect to *expression*: it must make the message of salvation *intelligible* by appropriate explanation, must unfold, in an instructive way, its contents more and more fully;
- With respect to its *inner subjective character* and at the same time its *impressive effect*: it must be a joyful *testimony*, a direct personal security for the truth of the message of salvation;
- With respect to its *aim*: everything in it must *aim at the glory of God*, the advancement of His kingdom and therewith the *salvation of men*, their *awakening* to faith and *edification* in faith.

## 2. DEDUCTIONS THEREFROM IN RELATION TO THE CONDITIONS OF THE MODERN CHURCH.

CREMER, *Aufgabe und Bedeutung der Predigt in der gegenwärtigen Krisis*, 1877.

WARNECK, *Warum hat unsere Predigt nicht mehr Erfolg?* 1880.

How far are these integral elements of the idea of preaching of value for the Church's present, for our already fixed congregational conditions?

(a) *Relation of this Conception of Preaching to that of  
Worship and Liturgy.*

(a) TO THE IDEA OF WORSHIP.

As a public act in congregational worship, nay, as the principal act of worship in the evangelical Church,—as the theory and history of worship show,—*congregational preaching is co-ordinate* with the solemn expression of the Christian faith of the universal Church for its self-edification, *i.e.* with *the aim of worship*, though it is not simply subordinate to it. Since, namely, the nature and object of the celebration of worship consist negatively in drawing the mind away from daily work, and positively in lifting it up into the sphere of the heavenly and eternal in order, as far as possible, to have and to enjoy as already present in time that which is away beyond time; and since, similarly, it is the nature and object of preaching to plant the eternal divine truths of salvation in the world and time, in order to raise men from the world and time into the kingdom of God, into spiritual fellowship with the world above, this common aim results in the inner *unity and mutual dependence* of both.

Yet the aim of congregational preaching is not exhausted in the mere elevating and enlivening of worship *as such*. It tends, like all parts of worship, always and everywhere to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ as its uppermost aim. And for this purpose *its task lies far beyond the observance of worship in itself*. Whilst the latter is only intended to express the already existing life of faith, preaching is also indeed an act which represents in free language the common truth of the Church's faith, yet not merely for the purpose of stating it (as Schleiermacher, Schweizer, Palmer, etc.), but in order that the congregation may be more and more permeated with it, that it may be brought to bear more and more completely on the thought and *life* of the people. And hence preaching

is *not*—like worship in general—*merely an expression, but also a presentation* and, in the expression and presentation of the divine life-giving truth, an *effective work*. Hence there results also with all the above unity the inner *difference* in the aim and nature of the two activities (cf. also Sack, Gaupp, Beyer, Kübel, etc.).

Those who characterise preaching *only as an act of expression*, must draw a very deep cleft between mission and congregational preaching, and, on the other hand, must *most closely connect preaching and worship*, and indeed derive the homiletical idea altogether from that of worship. But as we saw above the erroneous and misleading character of the mere *separation* of mission and congregational preaching, so here with regard to the blending of preaching and worship. They are in their nature and aim *two circles which cut, but do not quite cover, one another*. There are services (*e.g.* liturgical) which are very helpful to the kingdom of God even without preaching. Worship, therefore, does not necessarily include preaching. But preaching, and this is true even of congregational preaching, stretches out in its aim beyond that of mere co-operation with worship, it also desires to extend the kingdom of Christ and make faith effective in the life, and not merely in the house of God. In preaching, the *new* must also be ever brought forward along with the old (Matt. xiii. 52). The congregation must *grow* in knowledge and sanctification. At the same time, we do not deny that preaching is also an act of expression, stating the Church's already existing treasure of truth. But we must here distinguish between the Church in the ideal sense, the assembly of believers, and the actual congregation. That which the true Church possesses as its own is shown to the individual congregation (cf. the somewhat one-sided statement of Kliefoth [*Theorie des Kultus der evangelischen Kirche*, § 90]: "Preaching is the collective voice of the Church to her individual members"), and should be continually passing *in succum et sanguinem*. The expression or statement will and must work thus, and that, too, both in believers and in those who do not yet believe, to awaken the latter, to edify and improve the former. Hence the chief weight rests here on the *effective presentation*. The preacher stands there as a well, out of which flow streams of living water

(John vii. 38), and *gives*, whilst the congregation receives. This is on both sides an essentially different relationship from that which exists in the purely expressive worship. And because that which is given out and received, even *living* water, must be God's word, and must invite the hearers to accept salvation and strengthen and help them forward in it, so preaching is also essentially an effective work, if it is of the right sort.

( $\beta$ ) TO THE IDEA OF LITURGY.

As a free, active presentation of the Word of life, preaching is also especially *distinguished* in nature, aim, and form, from the service at the altar, from the liturgy, *i.e.* from the solemn expression in worship by the congregation, and by the mouth of the pastor in their name, of the Church's faith, namely, (1) as an *individual* action, and bearing the stamp of individuality, in contrast with the *common* act, performed in the name of all and by all together; (2) as also *active*, aiming at *new life* bringing forth *new and old* (Matt. xiii. 52), in contrast with the merely commemorative expression of *that which has already been*: for the liturgy only states the already attained platform of the Church's faith, whereas preaching will and must build further upon it, in order that the Church may *grow* in faith, in saving knowledge and sanctification; (3) as a *freely moving* form of the word in contrast with that which is *bound* by rules, with that which in the liturgy is definitely prescribed by the Church body. Hence it is perfectly clear that the aim of preaching reaches far beyond the mere self-expression of Christian piety (cf. also Sack, *Geschichte der Predigt*, S. 4; Gaupp, S. 60; Beyer, S. 43; Kübel, *Das Biblische Predigtmuster*, *Zeitschrift für Lutherische Theologie*, 1873, ii. 229; Cremer, *Aufgabe und Bedeutung der Predigt in der Gegenwärtigen Krisis*, 1877, S. 17 ff.).

With regard to the *first distinction*, the *individual in contrast with the common*, we have seen above that even

preaching (*i.e.* here always congregational preaching) is not merely an individual action, but is also a work in the name of the Church, though of the *ideal* Church indeed (not of the Church *talis qualis*), which has here handed over its common task to an individual, who now, in a manner individually determined, coloured by his personality and stamped with his peculiar qualities, performs in the single congregation the general task of the *μαθητευόμενος* for Christ, and indeed in this way that the individual even locally is *above the congregation*, which is passive and receptive, while the individual works in his representative capacity, without entirely sacrificing to the general body his individuality of character. The liturgist, on the other hand, is *in* the congregation, makes himself its priestly mouth, and this not merely of the *particular* congregation, but of the *whole* Church, expressing everything for and in the name of the body, so that it may be read from the heart and uttered by the mouth of every member of the Church; he therefore must compose nothing which is not the direct expression of the religious feeling, of the believing devotion of all together. Here, therefore, there must be nothing coloured by the individual, but *the individual is quite merged in the service of the whole*. The *liturgy* therefore forms the natural and fully justified *balance-weight against individuality in worship*, as it appears in preaching, so that the congregation is not too much given up to the subjectivity of the preacher. This is the first difference, which principally expresses itself outwardly also in the fact that in preaching the individual stands above the congregation in a *raised pulpit*, the liturgist, on the other hand, stands *in* the congregation, on an equal level with it at the altar or at the reading-desk.

*The second distinction* is connected with this, namely, *the active* in contrast with the *merely representative*. In preaching, as we have seen, the statement of the Christian faith, of the general treasure of saving truths which has been committed to the Church, becomes essentially an *offer*, an active communication of things old and new; not so in the liturgy. It is, in its true character, never a communication. The individual is not intended to learn anything new from it. It is rather a pure *representation*, a common expression of the Christian life of faith already existing in the Church, as it should move and express itself in everyone in the form of penitence and need of mercy (beginning of the liturgy), and

as the instinct of prayer (middle) and confession (end of it). Here also each individual appears by his devotion as an auxiliary factor, co-operating in the representation. *Here all work together, and no one upon the others*: hence it is a mere expression of the common life of faith, and in this expression a fresh common consecration to God. In preaching, on the other hand, *one works on all*: not merely what is already in existence should be stated in it, but *a new being* should always be aimed at. Even assuming the whole congregation to be believing or already awakened, still, preaching must always be building up, adding new stones to the existing foundation or building, and therefore ever aims at and works for a new being. In the liturgy *the Church rejoices in what she has*; in preaching *she strives after something new* (on the foundation of the old), and by it she seeks to grow. Hence in the former her action is that of statement, in the latter, of work. In the former she feels herself as what she *is*; in the latter she must shape herself to what she ought to be—must, as the visible Church, “constantly reform herself from the invisible” (Schweizer). For the living Church “*is one that is ever being and becoming*” (Schweizer), and also further developing itself. This second distinction also manifests itself externally, and this not merely in the elevated position of the pulpit, from which the preacher is to work upon the congregation, but also in the fact that only in the *liturgical, but not in the homiletical part of the service, the fine arts, poetry and music, appear* as an aid to worship. If preaching were only representative, it would also avail itself of art; but as it is not only representative, but communicative, and serves one purpose, aims at a definite effect, it therefore takes the form of an address only, and the homilète “appears neither as a poet, nor a singer, nor as a dramatic actor” (Schweizer, S. 157). Inasmuch as the liturgic element, on the other hand, is purely representative, the fine arts may be combined with it.

Closely connected with this, finally, is *the third distinction: the free and variable form of words in the sermon* in contrast with the *fixed form of the liturgy*. Since it is an individual communication, and continually has regard to the special circumstances of the congregation, preaching must also be a freely moving address, must be able to shape itself in infinitely varied discourse. Fixed homilies were always a sad necessity, and a great *testimonium paupertatis*

for the clergy, as they still are in the Greek Church. The liturgical part of the service, on the other hand, as a representation of that which is common to all, and has already happened and been held by the Church, in order to exclude all disturbing individual colouring, has always fixed itself in formularies, rubrics, and hymn books, and the abandonment of the liturgical element to the individual taste of the preacher is an unreasonable perversity (Zinzendorf excepted). Thus with the Congregationalists, for example, the Church prayers become much too long and half sermons.

From the above distinction between preaching and the liturgy we see also clearly the inner reason why *Protestantism especially cultivates preaching*, whilst *Catholic worship* lays the chief stress on the *liturgy*. *Protestantism does not hold the visible Church to be already infallible*, but it regards the Word of God as the unerring system of saving truth. It therefore labours continually for the *perfecting* of the Church and congregation by means of ever fresh unfolding and outpouring of *Scripture truth* over the people. Even in the solemnisation of public worship, therefore, it carries out in words an effective activity in the deep, genuine apostolic consciousness: "*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect*" (Phil. iii.). The *Catholic Church*, on the other hand, wants to be the infallible, *essentially perfect* Church, which has already become and is, and *to feel herself as such in worship*, instead of developing herself further. Hence she lays the chief emphasis upon representation, upon the liturgy. Only the competition with Protestants, especially where she comes much in contact with the evangelical Church, keeps preaching still alive in her: but where she reigns undisputedly, and is little affected by Protestant influences (*e.g.* up to quite recent times in Spain and Portugal), preaching—as also in the Greek and Armenian Churches—lies lamentably low.

(b) *Importance of the particular Elements of this Conception of Preaching in the Congregational Life of the Church.*

(a) IN RELATION TO THE DIVINE COMMISSION.

That preaching requires above all a divine commission, or an inward call, a *χάρισμα*, from the Lord, is true even



for the modern conditions of the Church, though with the difference that now, in the case of congregations already established, instead of a direct call from the Lord we have *one conveyed by means of the Church and her organs, with respect to the general priesthood*. In this case, however, every sending on the part of the Church should carry with it its inner attestation and confirmation by the Lord, and should also prove itself in course of time to be a divine sending, just as on the other side the inward call through the divine charisma seeks its seal in the recognition of the Church. Hence there results as an integral element in the Church's idea of preaching the divine-human, *i.e.* official call (*Augustana* xiv. ; *rite vocatus*).

We here apply successively the above leading features in the biblical idea of preaching to the given Church conditions and stop, with this first point, relating to the sending or commission of the preacher, at the controversy which has been discussed *ad nauseam* in our time *about the origin of the preacher's office*: Has it been directly appointed by Christ, and this not merely as an office, but also in the individual bearer of the office (Kliefoth, Löhe, Stahl, Vilmar, etc., always with special shading), or only in its principle by Christ, *i.e.* the office as such, and in individuals by the Church (Höfling, Ehrenfeuchter, Palmer, Harless, Nitzsch, and even Luther)? is it Christ who sends, or the Church, in reference to the congregation?

*It is false to set the one against the other: Christ or Church; it is the one in the other; they are related as the essential cause, the inner principle to the outward expression: the Lord reigns through the Church, and the Church has to send according to the will of the Lord; divine authority and human sending have their full validity—at least in congregations which are already established and under Church rule—only in and through each other! But the divine authority of the office itself is not to be confounded with the authorisation of particular official forms, or with conferring privilege upon particular persons for the office. Whoever traces back the latter to divine authority proceeds from that false conception of the Church, according to which the Church was founded directly by Christ, not*

merely as an invisible kingdom of God, but also as a visible institution, as an external establishment (Stahl), and shows in the latter his hierarchical sentiment, by which the new Lutherans depart completely from Luther's fundamental conceptions. For who emphasises more strongly than he the universal priesthood of believers? According to Luther, believers are the Church, and as such are in possession of all the benefits of salvation. According to him, "a Christian is able for all things," and what he does has the same validity "as if God Himself came down and did everything Himself." According to him, all believing Christians have the power to teach, to baptize, to administer the Lord's Supper, to bind and loose, and to sit in judgment on public teaching. Hence to him *the office arises out of the universal priesthood*, inasmuch as the congregation for the sake of order chooses one or more out of the whole, and hands over to him its functions, without being thereby prevented from discharging them itself *privatim* and in case of necessity.

But this choice, we would here add, must be no arbitrary one, but *must be guided by the divine charismata*, and thus conform to the will and indication of the Divine Chief Shepherd of the Church. For how else does God reveal His will to-day, His sending to an office in the Church, than by equipping for it by a charisma one and another? If the Church orders itself in accordance with this idea, if in its human appointment it seeks for the divine attestation showing itself in qualification for the office, *then the human commission proves itself to be also divine*, and we have the true interwoven divine-human authority. The *charisma*, and this not merely in itself (for it is often wasted), but in union with an apostolic spirit, is *the only security to us of the divine calling* of the individual (cf. Acts vi. 3: "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" [the diaconate]: cf. 1 Cor. xii., xvi. 15 ff.; Rom. xii. 5 ff.; Eph. iv. 11). By the charisma, the divine calling is fulfilled in the activity of the office, and by the vocation or call on the part of the organs of the universal priesthood it becomes a human one also. *Both elements are of necessity mutually dependent*. This seems to me the only true, biblical, evangelical view of the origin of the ecclesiastical office, equally removed from the hierarchical Catholic tendency on the one hand, and from the democratical thirst for power of major-

ities on the other. (We may recommend on this point: Höfling, *Grundsätze evangelisch-lutherischer Kirchenfassung*, S. 300, A. 21; Proger, *Die Geschichte der Lehre vom geistlichen Amt auf Grund der Geschichte der Rechtfertigungslehre*, 1857; Harless, *Ethliche Gewissensfragen hinsichtlich der Lehre von Kirche, Kirchenamt und Kirchenregiment*, 1862; against Stahl: Harnack, *Grundlegende Sätze über die Kirche, ihr Amt und Regiment*, 1861 [although it appeared before Stahl's work]: Palmer, *Pastoral Theologie: Der geistliche Beruf*.)

This holds good also of the modern *office of preaching* in particular. This difference may, indeed, be observed here, that to congregations already formed it is especially the Church that sends, to those that are to be formed it is principally the Lord who sends. At the same time, no very strict separation can even here be marked; for even to the mission field the Lord sends through the Church, *i.e.* the believers, and these again determine according to the divine gift; hence the interweaving of the divine and human commission. Ehrenfechter, *Praktische Theologie*, i. S. 336: "The permanent law is always this, that all sending by the Church must end in proving itself a sending by the Lord: but the sending by the Lord and His divine inspiration has its seal in the fact that it is recognised by the Church." And this is still more the case with *congregational preaching*. To its conception belongs the divine-human calling, the official authority. *The foundation*, the essential thing under all circumstances and conditions, is the inner divine calling through *the charisma*. Woe to the congregation or superior Church court which, in making its choice, does not look to this before all else, and woe to the preacher who without this inner call intrudes himself on the preacher's office; he will everywhere lack the inner joy and freedom, and along with this also the successful activity, the divine blessing! No office without inward call, no *ζῆσιμα* (or ordination) without *ζάρισμα* (Hundeshagen)! No human crops and crutches, whether they be scholarship or outward facility of speech, but especially no entrenching oneself in a high, unnaturally screwed-up conception of his office, or official bearing, will ever compensate for his inward and principal requisite. The still unbroken pride of the natural heart is conceivably flattered by the high idea of one's own learning, or by a high conception of the office, which more than anything else is calculated to alienate

our congregations completely from the Church. No, the charisma can never be dispensed with where the Church of Christ is to be truly served. By the bestowal of the charisma Christ *retains the principal control* of His Church in His own hand; and He must do so if the Church is not to go to ruin. Hence the divine calling, the charismatic equipment for office, is, and remains, simply indispensable.

But the *human call through the Church* must also be added. Cases can indeed be imagined where it pleases the Lord, through failure of the ecclesiastical office of teacher, to endow laymen with spirit and power,—as at one time, through failure of the office of priest and scribe, He often endowed a prophet (Amos, etc.),—and to send them forth as His preachers to people who were being deprived by hirelings of the true Word of Life; as also Church history often shows that, *where the teaching profession does not fully do its duty, the laity must help themselves*. In such cases the divine call to preach is sufficient, without any special human call. But these are exceptions. *The rule remains*, because *God is a God of order*, who will have everything to be done decently and in order, that *a human call ordered by the Church, and transfer of the universal priesthood of the Church to individuals, be added to the divine call*. The congregations of believers, in whom *Christ is present*, are *His members and organs, through which He accomplishes His will*. Then the office is made valid both on the divine and human side, and the one elevates and supports the other. Even where there is at first only the divine call, it will be necessary for such an one, for order's sake, to seek also recognition by the Church.

Hence also, in the *Prussian Order* for the induction of pastors (ii. S. 70), the divine and human call are put together: “Are you persuaded in your heart that as you are called *by this congregation*, so also you are called *by the Lord of the Church* to this holy service?”

(β) IN RELATION TO ITS SOURCE, THEME, AND AIM.

As no perfection of Christianity and of religion in general goes beyond Christ (John xvi. 14, xiv. 6), as also the holy Scriptures, in which the theme of the message of salvation has been fixed for all time, are inexhaustible,

and inasmuch as also the need of the people for salvation lasts to the end of this age, *Christ* and *salvation in Him*, the whole soteriological matter of the Scriptures in doctrine and history, are the ever-enduring theme of Christian preaching, but not scientific dogmatics, the *loci communes*, which are only a secondary source, and are partly in constant flux (so also Steinmeyer, *Topik*, S. 44 ff.). Since, moreover, in almost all our congregations, the majority at all times have not personally accepted the salvation which is in Christ, and will not accept it, preaching must still in our day and at all times of the world's history proclaim salvation, and ever offer it afresh as obtainable through repentance and faith. But because, also, in every congregation in which the gospel is clearly proclaimed, there are believers who already stand on redemption-ground, who expect and need rather to be helped forward in saving knowledge, the theme of modern congregational preaching must *never be merely for the purpose of awakening to faith, but always with the purpose of building up in the faith as well*. The whole scope and aim even of modern preaching may be thus described: *Awakening and edification*, since in this way both the glory of God and the true salvation of men are alike attained.

If what Christ says of Himself is true: "I am *the way, the truth, and the life*," then beyond this only and perfect way ("no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me") of reconciliation and reunion with God there is no perfection of religion. *Not the absolute truth itself*, as it appeared personally in Christ, *but the human conception of it*, the scientific as well as the practical, our always only fragmentary understanding of it, must be still further developed. The revelation in Christ is only in so far no stationary, but a progressive one, as it unfolds itself more and more richly in word and spirit, and in this unfolding ever works with fuller development in us. So long as its ennobling influence has not ceased, no one has a right to say that its mission has ceased, and that the present generation has outgrown it. *We do not get above it, but it goes in front of men, and*

always has done so, and raises them from step to step higher in the knowledge and practice of the true and good! But whatever the Spirit of truth, since Christ's departure to the Father, has revealed to men and shall still reveal, "He shall take of *Mine* and shall show it unto you" (John xvi.). Thus all true progress in religious knowledge proceeds from Christ. He is and remains the source and centre of truth for all time, and hence also *the theme of all true Christian preaching*. (See my pamphlet on *Vernunft und Offenbarung*, S. 40-47; *Moderne Zweifel am Christl. Glauben*, S. 116-120.)<sup>1</sup>

This theme of preaching is eternal, also because it is an *inexhaustible* one. Incipient preachers are often afraid that their material will soon run out. Let this not trouble us. *We soon get to know all about men, but never all about God and Christ*, or about God's Word. He who lives and grows in Christ is inexhaustible, on account of his living connection with the treasure-chambers of the invisible world.

In order that this theme may become really the property of the congregation, preaching must pursue a double aim; it must *awaken* and *edify*.

In spite of baptism, confirmation, the Lord's Supper, and external Christianity, few walk in the narrow way, many upon the broad! Hence the awful prevalence of unbelief, selfishness, pride, pleasure-seeking, etc., in our day. The great majority in the Church is unconverted. In view of this, it is necessary to continue the preaching of—"Repent, be ye reconciled to God." Hence we were not able to lay down above (section *b*) an essential difference between mission and congregational preaching.

If this is the awakening side, *the edifying side* must not be wanting either; this is the difference from the theme of the original or mission preaching. The gospel, in the long run, is never quite without result; hence there are almost always in a congregation awakened ones standing on the foundation, and needing to be further built up.

The *aim of preaching* to-day, therefore, is: *Awakening and edifying*, not the one without the other, nor the one *along with* the other, but the one *in* the other. We must *invite* into God's kingdom, *awaken*, call to conversion those

<sup>1</sup> See the English translation, *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief* (T. & T. Clark), 1874, pp. 129-134. [Trans.]

who are still without, or who have fallen back again into the world; those who are within we must *build up and help forward*, confirm and strengthen, exhort and encourage; in short, so labour that we may one day be able to present every member of the congregation perfect in Christ Jesus: Col. i. 28: *νοθεποῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον καὶ διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ, ἵνα παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ.* This is the *pastoral*<sup>1</sup> element in the idea of preaching.

This twofold aim of preaching, however, will only be attained if the preacher in his work really seeks the *glory of God and the salvation of men*. The more the hearers feel that the preacher is not seeking his own glory, but the glory of God and Christ, the more they see that he is not pleasing himself (*μη̄ εαυτοῦς ἀρέσκειν*, Rom. xv. i.), but finding pleasure in the divine Word, the more easily will they be awakened and edified. But so soon as they observe that he is also seeking his own glory, even if only as a secondary aim, this feeling stifles like a blight all other germs and motives of edification. Hence there is no one whom the devil tempts to vanity, to seeking their own honour, so much as preachers, especially young ones! And before we enter the pulpit to be a blessing to ourselves and others, we need very humble examination before the Lord as to the precise aim of preaching, whether we mean to work only for Him and His kingdom, or in reality for ourselves also.

It is clear, moreover, that this general aim—of advancing the kingdom of God—is not adequate to the production of a blessed fruit through preaching. The preacher, *starting with this general aim*, must also have before him *always a quite definite goal*, to which he wants to bring his hearers by his discourse. An arrow, shot at random into the air, will not stiek. It is this that makes so many sermons fruitless nowadays, that the preacher pursues no clear, definite aim (either in exposure of sins and frailties, or in encouragement, or in instruction on certain truths), but *only preaches, in order that there may be preaching*, and a discourse according to order. Nothing more wretched than this! The service of God and Christ, the stewardship of the mysteries of God, must not be made a trade, a mechanical

<sup>1</sup> *Seelsorgerliche*, lit. "soul-caring." [Trans.]

work, through leaving out of account the definite and so high and holy aims of God's kingdom, which embrace the world, and time, and eternity.

On this ground it seems suspicious when Palmer (S. 17 ff.), in accordance with his absorption of preaching in worship, represents preaching, like all worship, as *an aim in itself*. This is just as true and just as false as if we were to assert for preaching merely, or even predominantly, a *representative* character. "Preaching is not a form in itself, whose worth, as in the case of a work of art, rests in itself. The best thought-out and best produced sermon cannot find its satisfaction in itself, and it must always take it as a reproach if nothing further can be said of it than, 'It was a beautiful sermon!' The declaimer is content with a beautiful representation, the orator with the attainment of his aim. The former is rewarded by the praise, 'It was beautiful'; the latter by the determination which has been produced, 'I will do it!'" (J. Marbach, *Die deutsche Predigt*, "Homiletische Zeitschrift vom Standpunkt des wissenschaftlichen Protestantismus," 1873, i. S. 8). The aim of preaching must always and everywhere be subordinated to the higher aim of God's kingdom and its advancement. Why do we preach? Only in order that there may be preaching? No; in order that the kingdom of God may come. This—the kingdom of God, the foundation and development of fellowship with Christ in God, in faith and life—is *the aim*, both in missionary and in congregational preaching, and this aim is attained when the sermon is both awakening and edifying in its subject.

*Whence, then, are we to obtain this subject?* The prophet of God, the apostle of Christ, received it from the very mouth of God. Now it is quite otherwise. It is now to be obtained, to speak briefly, from the Church's treasure of truth. By this I understand, in the first place, the *holy Scriptures*, in which the revelation of God, His thoughts, deeds, and truths of salvation, partly historically, partly didactically and prophetically, have been for ever fixed. But the *Church's Creed* is also included in this, her symbols, as the Church's conception and the Church's interpretation of scriptural truth. Not as if it was to be placed on a level with Scripture in authority, but that the preacher who eats the bread of a particular Church should also interpret the Scriptures according to the direction of the confessional



standards of his Church, as least *in their fundamental truths*. In secondary points he may, indeed, claim for himself freedom of opinion; but if on principal questions he is not in harmony with the recognised interpretation of the Church, candour and integrity demand that he should separate himself from the service of this Church, and seek one whose standards he can accept with undivided conviction. Finally, there is also included here *personal experience* and enlightenment, partly of the individual, partly that which has become the common property of believers (see chap. iii.).

(7) IN RELATION TO ITS FORM OF EXPRESSION, ITS  
INNER CHARACTER, AND ITS OPERATION.

The difference between the form and the whole character of our congregational preaching, which always expounds and applies in an ordered discourse a text of Scripture, whether more analytically or synthetically, and the apostolic keryktik, which, in relation to Israel, limits itself to the proof of the fulfilment of the prophecies in Christ, corresponds exactly to the above esoteric aim of congregational preaching *as a part of worship* in contrast with the exoteric aim of mission preaching *as an appeal to men*. Since preaching, as a part of worship, must now bear also the character of the devotional and ecclesiastically beautiful, and at the same time can only serve the aim of edification by clear and well-ordered arrangement, an *oratorical artistic element* is inseparably connected with the modern idea of congregational preaching, and has been added, as the form and model of composition, to the general task of proclamation and explanation of the message of salvation. Yet the artificial development of the sermon as an oration must never interfere with the simplicity and force of the passage of Scripture which it is to explain, the human formal arrangement and division must not interfere with the free growth of the subject under the divine presentation, and especially with the free working of God's spirit in the preacher. On the contrary, the

*inner fundamental character* of Christian preaching as a *personal testimony* is so inalienable from the idea of preaching, that even after the cessation of the external testimony of eyes and ears, congregational preaching, far removed in point of time from the great facts of salvation, only as the direct personal assurance and testimony of experience to the divine truth, the divine power and blessing of the gospel, corresponds to the nature and scope of the former.

As the witness character of preaching essentially influences its expression, we have here taken both together.

If we compare the original form of preaching: "Repent," etc., or even the proclamation of the risen Lord from Pentecost on, with the modern sermon, the question suggests itself, Whence the vast difference? This depends partly on the difference between mission and congregational preaching, partly on Church custom and worship, with the demands of Christian culture and the progress of theological knowledge, partly on the aim of preaching to produce an awakening and edifying effect under these given conditions of culture. The difference is, in short, that between the simple proclamation of a *new message* and an *oratically arranged discourse*. It is true, the oratorical is by no means wanting in the speeches of Christ and the apostles, or even of the prophets: but a sermon in the ecclesiastical, artificial sense is, nevertheless, nowhere found in Scripture, doubtless because Christ and the apostles *nowhere* speak on an Old Testament text in the manner of our modern sermon, the text serving as a basis for the whole sermon, although they often enough refer to an Old Testament passage. The exegesis of the apostles is—truly Semitic—always only the explanation of a particular fact as the fulfilment of an earlier prophecy: "To-day is this Scripture fulfilled." The basing of the sermon on a definite text of Scripture first became requisite when the testimony of the preachers' own eyes and ears ceased, and they therefore saw themselves compelled to have recourse to the words of an eye-witness.

*The oratorical element* was first added to the character and idea of preaching as ecclesiastical preaching, after the time of Origen, and hence Palmer (S. 10) can call him "the

Father of Church Preaching" (see above, the historical part). As every building presupposes *a plan* and must be *systematically* carried out, so also the edification and advancement of the hearer must be carried out by the ecclesiastical discourse. Hence definite laws for logical order and arrangement, which however, in distinction from heathen rhetoric (see above, p. 17), are modified partly in accordance with the aesthetic spiritual character of Christian worship, and partly in accordance with the specifically biblical subject and the sacred aim of Christian preaching (see under the formal part).

In the latter connection, let one thing only be remembered: *the artificial arrangement of a sermon should never take away from it the character of being divinely given*, if it is not to lose in spiritual effect. Much as careful preparation and meditation belong nowadays to the idea of the Church's preaching, and much as a clear arrangement is of the greatest importance for edification, for leaving behind an effective ideal impression, yet it must be a mistake to emphasise the artificial activity in homiletic production so strongly as Palmer does (S. 16 ff.). *The preacher must not think of himself as an artist, i.e. an artistic orator*, or through the self-satisfaction which then involuntarily arises all strength, all blessing will disappear, and there will only be the clanging cymbal. And even the congregation does not want to have the man, the orator before it, but the messenger of Christ, who, in communion with God over a special text, has equipped himself with old and new thoughts and truths for the spiritual advancement of the people, who will pour out on the people the word and Spirit of Christ, life from God, as it has previously become personal in the preacher. It is a secret often experienced, that by too much formal measuring out, the Spirit is easily quenched. Many preachers who are anointed with the Spirit must often—through a sudden impulse of the Spirit in the pulpit—expand particular points to much greater extent than they had intended in the study, just for the sake of some particular hearers on whom the Spirit then wants specially to work, and this, indeed, without the preacher having any knowledge of their presence. In this case it is the right course, notwithstanding all previous plans, to give oneself up to the leading and impulse of the Spirit; in such a case, an obstinate adherence to the form

and proportion of their own conception would be a clear unfaithfulness (cf. for example, Spleiss' *Life*, S. 190, by Stokar). This is true also even of the preparation of the sermon.

*The true power of spiritual eloquence arises from the co-operation of God, from the flow of divinely-given thoughts, and the expression of these in worthy form.* But this flow presupposes a sinking of self in God, and for no one is this more indispensable than for the preacher (cf. Gaupp, S. 86 ff., who regards preaching "as an act of the Holy Spirit operating through the holy Scriptures").

Let us therefore, in considering the oratorical element in preaching, *attach no exaggerated importance to the formal artificial arrangement, completion, and division.* A sermon may be very good in an oratorical aspect, and perfectly clear and correct in regard to arrangement and division, and yet may be a miserable, inefficient, mechanical work. And, conversely, it may be one-sided and defective in division, unfinished in an oratorical aspect, and yet, on the whole, may be admirable and most effective. Why? Because it is a testimony drawn from divine depths. Hüffell, therefore, may justly say: "Every sermon is only worth the effect it produces."

It is *the witness-character*, in all cases, that makes a sermon effective. Hence it is for ever inalienable from the sermon. But there is a difference in the testimony of the Old Testament, the apostolic, and the ecclesiastical stages. *The prophet* testifies what he has heard from God, or seen in visions, or must speak under the impulse of the Spirit, whether he had previously personally appropriated the contents of his message or not (see Werner, *Ueber Offenbarungen* ["On Revelations"] S. 57 ff.). Christ, on the other hand, says (John iii. 11): "Verily I say unto you, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." The apostles testify what they themselves have seen and even experienced in their own hearts (1 John i. 1 ff.: John vi. 69: "We believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ"). The *later preachers* have to testify what they have experienced in their own hearts, and have obtained from Scripture by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. *If they lack entirely the inner experience, then the witness-character ceases, and therewith also the true, blessed effect of preaching.* On the

other hand, as a testimony to Christ from one's own experience and from the Christian consciousness of believers, as a proclamation of that which is divinely given, not merely in Scripture, but also received for the special case by looking up to God, preaching has still the character of *a divine commission*, and is as really a *divine act* as the proclamation of salvation in ancient times.

Two further elements are finally noted. During the sermon, if it is of the right sort, *i.e.* a living testimony, there arises between preacher and people *a secret spiritual relationship*, by means of which the preacher feels, even in the pulpit, perceives immediately, when anything deeply impresses their hearts and consciences. Only a glowing soul kindles others, and it soon perceives this kindling. Such a glow, however, is only attained in the case of a living witness. Only through the witness-character of preaching there come from time to time moments of deep inner fruitfulness, which the preacher immediately perceives as such. And it is these especially which occasion, even in the preacher himself, a holy joy of production and spiritual begetting, through which he himself obtains an inner enrichment, *a deep blessing for himself from his own preaching*.

### 3. JUSTIFICATION AGAINST OTHER CONCEPTIONS OF PREACHING.

#### (a) *Against the Roman Catholic Conception and Practice.*

If preaching, in the evangelical system of worship and homiletic, forms the principal part of divine service, Catholic homiletic, on the other hand, as its scanty cultivation shows, in accordance with the Romish exaggeration of the liturgical and sacramental acts of worship, connected as it is with their legal priestly character and their belief in the power and merit of the *opus operatum*, without the inward receptivity and moral self-surrender of its individual subjects, must estimate *the value of preaching in contrast with ceremonial service much lower*, and therefore also must include preaching in the organism of divine service much

less strictly than is done by the evangelical Church, and by its homiletic in particular. Through the Catholic over-estimate of the Church as an external institution, and in accordance with its principle, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, Catholic homiletic must further assign to preaching essentially a missionary character, and, as its chief aim, to lead to the Church or confirm in it, whereas the evangelical homiletic in accordance with Scripture finds the work of preaching to lie first of all in leading to CHRIST or in confirming in His fellowship by edification, for evangelical preaching must generally address itself to a congregation called to freedom of belief, having attained its majority or to be educated to attain it. With this the fact is also connected, that evangelical preaching, in accordance with the essential principle of Protestantism, must always set over against acknowledged *sin* the *free grace of God* in Christ; Catholic preaching, on the other hand, will set over against *sin* the saving institution of the Church, against vice, *virtue*, instead of the regenerating power of the Spirit of God, in moralising, semi-Pelagian, indeed often quite rationalistic fashion. Finally, whilst evangelical preaching must be built up on the basis of a text of Scripture alone, the subject of which it expounds and applies, in the *Catholic* view, in accordance with the Romish subordination of Scripture to ecclesiastical tradition, the sermon stands *in a much looser relation to the text of Scripture*; it must treat it less as the dominating fundamental idea, but only as the so-called motto, which is often put on a level with the many patristic quotations; indeed, some Catholic homiletes regard the text as among the "less essential elements" of the sermon (cf. Lutz, *Handbuch der katholischen Kanzelberedsamkeit* ["Handbook of Catholic Pulpit Eloquence"], 1851, S. 576). Hence also in the form of its expression a greater *biblical simplicity, dignity, and purity* must generally belong to evangelical, in contrast with Roman Catholic preaching, which often only too little rejects oratorical ostentation and other arts calculated for effect.

(b) *Justification of Preaching as an active expressive Testimony to the Salvation which is in Christ, against other Conceptions within the Protestant Church.*

(a) THE ONE-SIDED RHETORICAL CONCEPTION,

as it was formerly represented by Schott, and more recently by Theremin (Lutz, etc.), which regards preaching only as a species of human oratory in general, and assigns to it everywhere as its definite aim the *persuasion of the hearer* to any moral resolution, to be produced by all rhetorical means—a persuasion which can only proceed from a moral subject itself, and hence “eloquence is a virtue”—overlooks the fact that the task of preaching is less persuasion than conviction, that, generally speaking, it is never mere impulse to an act or excitement, if the dangers of methodistical pressing and forcing are to be avoided: that preaching as a means of edification often much rather attains its aim *by mere promotion of saving knowledge and insight* (although this naturally works also secondarily on the will). The result of this conception is that *too much of a human and artificial character is given to the work of preaching*, and it is especially overlooked that the peculiarly persuasive force of preaching, *i.e.* that which touches heart and will, lies not in rhetorical methods, in glowing argument or diction, not at all in *human* pressure and conquest, but in the power of truth and vital strength which is in the *divine* word itself, in the majesty of all that which the hearer recognises as *divinely given* to the preacher and spoken by him with divine commission, in short, in the authoritative power of a *witness* led by the Spirit of God and sealed by Him. Christ, indeed, often bestows upon His messengers a great power and art of speech, but it is “as a new *nature*, not elaborated by art” (Stier, S. 186).

Compare above, in the Introduction (p. 13 ff.), the relation of homiletic to rhetoric. Here we are dealing with Schott's

*Theorie der Beredsamkeit*, 1815, which, moreover, is already antiquated, and especially with Theremin's *Die Beredsamkeit eine Tugend* ["Eloquence a virtue"], a book which is still the principal handbook of the students in the Baptist Seminary at Rochester, in the State of New York; *Demosthenes und Massillon*, and other works.

What is *right* in that idea we have already seen. If the Spirit of God is the deepest source of sacred eloquence, access to that Spirit and continuance in Him, active drawing from Him, is certainly something virtuous. But what is *wrong* in this idea *may thus be seen*. If eloquence is a virtue, then it is also a Christian *duty*, and therefore to be striven after and even attained by all. But this no one would wish to assert. The art of preaching is in this way too much humanised, represented as something to be attained by the method of human morality, whereas the divine charisma should be considered above all else in connection with it.

*The one-sidedness* of this view lies *partly in the tendency* to persuade to a resolution, to a deed. But preaching must also quietly build up in knowledge, and must not *so much persuade* as *convince*. I may greatly help myself and my hearers in the consideration of a fact of redemption, in the understanding of a mystery of faith, so that we are really edified by the sermon, without any actions specially following as the fruit of it; but the reaction of knowledge upon will and action is not therefore to be denied. The one-sidedness partly consists also *in the essential fundamental conception of preaching* as a *human art of persuasion*. This would sink it to the level of ancient rhetoric or of forensic eloquence. Theremin has taken his idea of oratory far too much from his ideals in classical antiquity, and has also allowed himself to be far too much imposed on by the human art of the showy French orators. Demosthenes and Massillon were his models, which may indeed be accounted for in the descendant of a French family. But though his constant emphasis on moral force, which should rule everything in this art of persuasion, even to diction and action, is worthy of due recognition, *yet the divine factor, which is the principal factor, does not get its proper place*. Only that which is *divinely given*, which bears in its forehead the Spirit of God, is that which will penetrate and convince the hearers, whether it be drawn from Scripture or received



from above by personal illumination. *This alone presents itself to their receptive minds with an overwhelming force of divine authority.* They bow to the *divine*, but not to the human, even though it were the best and most moral. The divine, however, is only felt in preaching when it is a *testimony*: the too great art of Theremin, even with the best intentions, drives away simplicity (Stier, S. 183).

(β) THE PURELY DIDACTIC CONCEPTION.

The *didactic conception* of preaching, shared by the *Reformers* (cf. in the symbols, *docere verbum* often = to preach), even by Spener, and in the illuminist times by *Rationalists* and also by a section of the supernaturalists—for different reasons—and more recently again defended by Nitzsch, according to which preaching should be essentially an instruction for the people, though it emphasises a true and important element in the idea of preaching (see above, section (α)), for every good sermon should in some way be instructive—nevertheless suffers also from a certain *one-sidedness*. *Preacher and hearer do not merely stand to one another in the relationship of teacher and scholar*, since the principal subject of preaching is nothing new to the congregation, but as servants of Christ and saved souls, who are to be called to the true following of Christ or confirmed in it. For the latter, however, not merely a *διδασχί* as such, but a living *testimony* is requisite. The special *διδάσκειν* serves this *only as an accompanying element*, as a *means* to the end of understanding and fuller explanation: hence in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, *διδάσκοντες* appears only as a means for carrying out the chief command *μαθητεύσατε* (cf. also Bähr, *Der protestantische Gottesdienst*, 1830, S. 12 ff.).

That Nitzsch, a nature so thoroughly instructive, with whom everything oratorical disappeared behind the fulness of instructive thoughts, regards preaching under the aspect of *διδασχί*, can be understood from this peculiarity of his. And when (S. 2, 3) he appeals for this to the passages

of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 2, vii. 29), ἐδίδασκειν αὐτοὺς λέγων, etc., and others, we certainly will not deny that in the New Testament διδάσκειν and διδασχῆ are sometimes used in the general sense, including the whole preaching of the gospel (Acts ii. 42: διδασχῆ τῶν ἀποστόλων; cf. Col. i. 28). It is also quite natural that the gospel must appear first of all as a new teaching, especially where it is necessary to lead back to the truth a people led astray by false teaching or sunk in ignorance, and to give them right fundamental ideas on the great facts of redemption. Just for the same reason it is very natural that even in *Reformation times* the didactic aspect of preaching prevailed. *Then teaching was again necessary above all else* (Luther: it is just “as if we held service among Turks or heathen in an open place or field”) before they could get the length of edification and growth, yes, even of awakening. Hence in the symbols *docere verbum* is often used for preaching; hence in Melancthon’s *Loci* the Church is often called a *coetus scholasticus*, and Calixtus (*Epitome Theologia*, 1619, p. 281) describes it as *coetus hominum docentium et discantium*. This is easily understood; as also that a didactic nature like Spener, fitted entirely for catechising, gives his sermons throughout the character of teaching, and that those who recognise in preaching only a means of enlightenment—the Rationalists—must regard everything which lies outside the didactic aspect as lost time and trouble.

But apart from other things, let us not overlook *the difference in the times*. If at one time, like that of the apostles and reformers, and in mission preaching generally, it is above all else necessary to lay a good foundation by teaching, at other times it is more necessary to build still further upon it. If the didactic element must predominate in the former, it does not therefore follow that it is to dominate the whole idea of preaching for all times and conditions. Bähr (*ut supra*, S. 14 ff.) says on this point: “Preaching *as teaching* has now rather outlived itself. At the time of the Reformation it may have been an absolute necessity, but the circumstances have mightily changed since then. One does not even need to be a learned theologian to be able to dispense with such instruction as is usually given in most sermons.” This much, at any rate, is true: preaching does not offer to the Church member who has had a Christian training something entirely new; only

a new inculcation and sometimes intensification, but specially new application of the instruction in the faith which was previously received. Or again, in this view, is not *the church made into a school, the pulpit into a chair?* If preaching was intended only to instruct, *the service* should have been *otherwise arranged*; this object would be much better attained by division of the hearers into classes, by question and answer, etc. But *the relation between preacher and people is plainly a higher one than that between teacher and scholar*, namely, that of an ambassador of Christ and a people who, purchased by Christ, are now to become more and more His actual possession. This requires, however, a “movere” at least as much as a “docere.” But, as a matter of fact, the somewhat cool, intellectual *διδάσκειν* is not adequate for the “movere”; it requires a *testimony ἐν παύρησίν, ἀπὸδειξις πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως*. The *διδασκίη* is not the only means for accomplishing the testimony; the *παραίνεσις* must be added, especially *where the principal subject of preaching has long been familiar*. This fact alone would have shown this conception of preaching to be one-sided. It suggests that the *principal part of the διδασκίη* is accomplished *in religious instruction and catechetics*. If this is to be assumed, as in the congregational preaching of to-day, as having already taken place, then the *παραίνεσις* must step into the foreground, as indeed rightly happens in innumerable sermons. Most of our preachers are much too abstract, sometimes too rhetorical, sometimes too coldly didactic, in order thoroughly to reach the people. Most of it flies over the heads of one-half of our audience. The structure of the whole can hardly be retained by anyone any longer.

#### (γ) THE ONE-SIDED AWAKENING CONCEPTION,

which regards the sermon as merely a converting-sermon addressed to the old man, has been little held by homiletes in Germany, where only Stier to some extent shares it, inasmuch as he regards the object of the exhortation, even if only children of God should be the hearers, as always only the natural man in them (*Kerygmik*, S. 3). On the other hand, it prevails in many forms in practice, even though not just so much in theory, in England and America,

especially among the Methodists (cf. their excessive emphasis of conversion as the object, to which, however, most recently holiness preaching has been somewhat independently added) and many other free churches and sects. It is not always to the natural man or what remains of him in the believer that preaching is to be addressed, but often also to the child of God as such, because he must be strengthened and refreshed in his state of grace and consciousness of childhood, led onward in knowledge of the Scriptures and experience of salvation, and thus impelled more and more to the overcoming of the old nature. And it is not merely the beginning of the work of salvation in a man, repentance and conversion, which should be produced by preaching, but also the constant progress of that work, *i.e.* edification must be added to awakening. But that the awakening side, especially with the conditions of our modern congregations, should never be altogether wanting, is and remains the true element in this conception.

Compare my article: "The modern preaching of Protestant Germany, its characteristic Strength and Weakness" ("Die heutige Predigt des evangelischen Deutschlands, ihre charakteristische Stärke und Schwäche": *Vierteljahrschrift für wissenschaftliche und praktische Theologie*, of Jaekel, Cleveland, Ohio, 1886, iii. S. 233-287). Stier says (*Keryktik*, S. 3): "Even where true children of God only are addressed, yet it is not to the child of God that the exhortation is really addressed, but to the slothfulness or despondency that still remains in him. Consequently he who is preached to is always in reality the natural man only, in his blindness and sinfulness." This is not correct. Compare also Krauss, S. 127: The preacher has not always to speak "to the natural man," but as a Christian to Christians. No doubt in every sermon even the believer must receive a sting and spur for his old man; no doubt his progress in knowledge and experience depends a good deal upon the constant decrease of his natural man in strength and influence. But this *negative side is not the only condition of spiritual growth; the positive must be added to it, the ever-deeper enlightenment, the increasing fruitfulness of the inner man itself, and this, too, in his already*

believing nature, in his consciousness of childhood itself. Stier overlooks the latter. Preaching may and must address the child of God as such, proceeding from his previous believing experience and then building further upon it, in order that he may grow in knowledge and holiness (*e.g.* at Easter on the meaning of the bodily nature of Jesus, of the glorified body: at Christmas on God's plan of salvation, and the wisdom of its accomplishment; or at other times on the connection of the old and new covenants, the beauty of Christ, the glory of the new Jerusalem, the relation of the new creation to the old, etc.). By all this a genuine progress, a true edification, a deeper insight into God's purposes, and therefore a fuller, humbler self-surrender to Him, a greater confidence in, and a more earnest aspiration after, His kingdom; in short, the most manifold fruit can be quite well produced without my having addressed "to the natural man in his blindness and sinfulness," but to the spiritual man. Stier, however, has not himself once followed this principle in his sermons. The one-sidedness of this school we see especially in *sectaries*, whose only, everlasting, thousand-fold varied theme always remains conversion.

A decided difference here shows itself between the English and German modes of preaching. German preaching is generally more didactic, whether dogmatical or ethical: English preaching is more practical. The former is more exposition of the text, the latter more application; the former more statement, the latter more enforcement; the German more general, the English more concrete: the former often deeper, the latter clearer, more comprehensible. The German lays more stress on edification, the English is more definite on awakening and conversion, this cardinal question being ever put in the front. The German assumes the whole audience to be Christian, the English draws definite distinctions, and keeps converted and unconverted sharply apart. On the whole, the German produces more knowledge, the English more decided action, more practical fruit of faith.

(δ) THE ONE-SIDED EDIFYING CONCEPTION OF PREACHING AS MERELY REPRESENTATIVE AND PART OF WORSHIP.

Modern German preaching and homiletic have been much more deeply affected and moulded by the *purely*

*edifying* conception of preaching as devotional and æsthetic, separating too sharply between halientic mission preaching and congregational preaching, and placing the active awakening factor essentially after that of statement and edification (Schleiermacher, Schweizer, G. Baur, Palmer, Krauss, Bassermann, etc.). According to it preaching is a devotional confession, which always assumes the believing character of the congregation and therefore draws from the *consciousness of the congregation*, a solemn and artistically beautiful statement of the Christian belief and thought of the whole body in oratorical form for the quickening of the religious consciousness, its chief aim being therefore neither instruction nor conversion, but *edification*. It was certainly a meritorious act thus to restore, even in the sermon, the sacred right *of the people* to their Christian faith, in opposition to the subjectivity and arbitrariness of rationalism. *Only we must not confound the faith of the Church with the temporary sentiment of the particular congregation*, the eternal truth of salvation objectively fixed in Scripture, and essentially also in the creeds of the Church,—from which truth the evangelical preacher has to draw in the first place in relation to every age,—with the religious sentiment of the time, always in constant flux, and its very vague precipitation in the “churches,” or the consciousness and experience of true believers (almost always a minority) with the view of life held by the majority of church members, which in so many ways is subordinated even to the unchristian currents of the spirit of the age; the ideal condition of the congregation, as it certainly ought to be, with that which actually exists. Otherwise the preacher will only dare at last to utter Christian saving truth in so far as it has met with the approval of the majority of his congregation, which already many are demanding nowadays—a service of men, on which, in 2 Tim. iv. 3 ff., sentence has long ago been passed (so also Beyer, Gaupp, Cremer, Oosterzee, Harnack).

It is not the temporary sentiment of the congregation,

but the saving faith *of the Church*, to be attested by Scripture, which in preaching is to influence the worshipping assembly—the sentiment of the congregation, however, only in so far as the believing Church also exists in the congregation; and the preacher should express that which animates the minds of believers, and in general have regard to the spiritual requirements of the congregation. If, then, living faith has as yet but little existence in the thought and life of the congregation, preaching, in accordance with the character and aim of the entelechy of the divine Word, must not so much *draw* from that thought and life what relates to saving truth, as rather seek to *implant it in it* from Scripture, the Church's faith and spiritual experience, by impressive testimony of the redemption that is in Christ, and must not assume a universal sentiment of faith as existing in the congregation (cf. Schleiermacher and his confounding of the ideal and empirical congregation), but must show it what in this respect *ought* to prevail in it.

From this we see at once the one-sidedness of the almost exclusive vindication of the *representative* aim of congregational preaching and the banishment of the active awakening element to mission preaching in Palmer, who also rests on the assumption that the foundation of faith is in general firmly laid in the hearers. But this does not apply nowadays in the case of innumerable "members of the Church," and even of many churchgoers. If we treat them all as believers, with whom the great question is already settled (cf. Palmer's appeal to the confirmation vow), then they are easily led to confound their church membership with true faith, and therefore into dangerous self-deception. In view of the various spiritual requirements, especially in times of falling-away from the faith, the preacher, in order to become all things to all men (1 Cor. ix. 21, 22), must not, on the assumption that faith is generally prevailing in his hearers, merely *state* truth for edification, but must also be willing to lay the foundation, to awaken, to *produce an effect* with the Word of truth.

Preaching as a homily or congregational preaching must certainly first of all testify to, and therefore *state* the faith of, the universal Church; but this representative treatment in preaching ends in an *active* treatment also; for the preacher wants to lead the congregation *further* in faith and Christian life. And, notwithstanding the diversified spiritual requirements of his hearers, his task does not thus become at all a "complicated" one (Palmer), for a living *testimony* of Christ is suitable for them all together, inasmuch as it at once awakens and edifies. If a living statement as such (not to speak of a testimony of spiritual power) is always *active* also, then those homiletes must then and there allow an active element as supplementary in congregational preaching. Just the most successful pulpit orators have never preached for edification *merely*, but always for awakening also, and have never sought to state merely, but always to produce an effect also, whilst the one-sided adhesion to that idea of preaching helps to lead to a state of things in the Church that finally results in the other extreme, that of Methodism. For the same reason this essential separation of mission and congregational preaching becomes more and more impossible, and leads to unfruitfulness, since so much heathenism, requiring to be newly evangelised, is luxuriating within our Church itself.

"Nec sum contentus eloquentia saeculi nostri" (Pliny). Compare Cremer, *Aufgabe und Bedeutung der Predigt in der gegenwärtigen Krisis*, 1877 ["Scope and Meaning of Preaching in the present Crisis"]. "Preaching is the reproduction of the divine Word, solemn and public proclamation of it for the community, but not a statement of the sentiment of the congregation, and especially in our day anything but this; it ought to be God's Word to the people. Liberalism wants to construct a congregation without community, therefore preaching must foster in the congregation the true idea of the Church; it is important to testify from experience the uniqueness and immutability of the gospel, and the certainty of salvation. Not essays, but realities must be given."



We arrive here at the most decisive point, to which all that has hitherto been said only served as preparatory, and we must therefore scrutinise somewhat more closely the particular tendencies that here come into view.

1. *The standpoint of the devotional-aesthetic conception of preaching.*

As Schleiermacher, in his *Christliche Sittenlehre* (S. 508 ff.), regards *worship* in contrast with all active work as a *purely representative action*, which, "in comparison with that which purifies and extends, so far as efficacy is concerned, appears null and void," in the dedication of the first collection of his sermons, he explains that he wants "to preach as to Christians," and to regard worship as distinguished from mission work. And hence Schweizer, in his work, "Schleiermacher's Effectiveness as Preacher" (*Schleiermacher's Wirksamkeit als Prediger*, S. 13), describes him quite correctly: "He wished to speak *as to brethren*, whose Christian consciousness he was developing, not originating: he wished to authenticate, elucidate, and confirm it in them, not to offer it to them as something new." Here we have the *origin of this standpoint* before us, with all its elements of truth, but also with all its one-sidedness. On this basis Schweizer himself has further built, inasmuch as he wants, not indeed to exclude the active pastoral factor, but yet, resting on that original meaning of *κοινωνία* as the edifying intercourse of Christian brethren, to have the devotional representative element regarded as *the root* of all homiletical activity (*Homiletik*, S. 119 ff.). Palmer stands at essentially the same point (*Homiletik*, S. 15 ff.): "We regard it as beyond doubt that preaching, like all worship, *is in the first degree to be included not in active work, but in representative action*, and, indeed, as all expression of the inner nature of the general and individual life must in worship have the character of the solemn, of the beautiful, homiletic production becomes an artistic work, . . . as the confession, as the expression of Christian faith . . . it is an aim in itself." Hence our description of this as the devotional-aesthetical standpoint. This standpoint is shared by most modern homilettes, even by Nietzsche, with special modification by his fundamental didactic conception.

The essential preliminary question, the relation of preaching to worship, we have discussed above, and have claimed for the former a more independent place than

these homiletes do. Here, on the other hand, we look more at the *practical consequences* of this conception. Its one-sidedness, then, is seen first of all in the too wide separation of mission and congregational preaching, which on its part again rests on the undervaluing of the active element, which, especially for the modern circumstances of congregations, is in the first degree necessary.

2. *The one-sidedness of this standpoint in the too sharp separation of mission and congregational preaching.*

*It certainly makes an essential difference for preaching, whether a Christian congregation is assumed as a body of hearers or not, whether we are only to proclaim and awaken, or to build further upon the foundation, which generally has been already laid,—a difference whether, on the ground of the Church's faith, we can address the Christian consciousness and conscience, even though only in the remnant of it, or only the universal feeling and moral consciousness of mankind, and especially the remnant of conscience in a darkened moral consciousness: in short, it makes a difference whether the preacher can use as auxiliary means all the helps which spring from the morality of the Christian Church, or whether, along with the aversion of the natural man, he has to contend also with all those hindrances which originate in heathen immorality and ignorance.*

If, therefore, we are unwilling on the one hand to deny the difference, so, on the other hand, we cannot lay down *an absolute difference* (see above, 1, (b), p. 63): for the *μαθητεύειν* for the Lord remains in both cases the *one* task. And every glance at the present-day conditions of congregations must confirm us in this. Even the Christian congregation, notwithstanding the fact that it has been baptized, and has been included in [mortised into] the outward framework of the Church, consists, and always will consist, of two parts—disciples and non-disciples, converted and unconverted, each side of whom has, indeed, many gradations, but in such a way that *between the lowest degree of the converted and the highest degree of the unconverted—the degree nearer to the kingdom of God—there remains a fundamental line of demarcation, formed by the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins, by the actual state of grace.* Even Krauss (S. 127) speaks on this point, quite in the sense of the liberal theology, to which the distinction between converted and unconverted is hateful, when he says: “The distinction

between those who have not been born again and those who have, which is assumed by Stier, is an essentially abstract one, which for practical purposes has no justification!"

He who has not therefore yet passed that line of demarcation, who has not penetrated to the real state of grace,—and in most cases this will apply to the great majority of members of a congregation,—he is *still an object for mission preaching*, i.e. he must be first awakened. The message, "Repent: be ye reconciled with God," etc., must again and again be impressed upon his heart. Hence *in congregational preaching, mission preaching must ever continue, awakening must ever go side by side with edifying*. And, therefore, we cannot fundamentally separate the two.

If, in addition, we take specially the modern conditions of our time, the spiritual characteristic of which is, in a very extensive degree, lukewarmness, money-seeking, and pleasure-seeking,—yes, even falling away from faith, unbelief, and superstition,—of our time, in which materialism is palpably spreading *heathenism* again in the very midst of Christendom, so that wide fields of Christendom, whole classes and strata of the modern civilised peoples, must, above all things, be *Christianised again*, we have in these conditions only too many of the most urgent reasons why the work of mission preaching, awakening, and conversion is by no means to be effaced from modern congregational preaching!

On the same grounds we declare ourselves as also opposed to—

3. *Placing the active element in the idea of preaching behind the purely mental*, which takes place in all cases where the aim of preaching is supposed to be reached in worship, instead of keeping in view, as the chief aim, the advancement of God's kingdom, which extends far beyond worship. We have seen above (p. 75) that preaching is certainly a mental process, a statement of the Church's treasure of truth. The life of God, which has become personal in the preacher and in the believing community, "wants to express, confess, and bear testimony to itself" (Palmer, S. 16). But—and here is evident the *fundamental error of this view*—the source from which this is drawn is *not the congregation talis qualis, but the Church, i.e. the believing people of all ages: it is not the consciousness of the congregation as such, but the consciousness of the Church*

of Christ, of the children of God in the congregation, or, generally, the experience of believers. When therefore the expression of the consciousness of the people is regarded as the chief aim of preaching, the *actual congregation* is regarded *in an ideal sense* as a congregation of believers, or as the true living church of Christ. It is the latter, the church in the church, which, indeed, lifts up and keeps up the preacher; it is from its treasure of Christian experience (as, in general, that of the believing people of all ages) that, along with his own, the preacher can draw and testify joyfully. To those, however, who do not yet stand in the faith and love of Christ, we cannot certainly speak yet of their Christian feelings, but rather, first of all, only of their natural, sinful state. We are not to bring to their consciousness what is already Christian in them, because there is hardly anything of this in them yet, but what Christian understanding and experience *ought to be* in them. From the remnants of the moral consciousness which are still in them, from their conscience, from the *anima naturaliter christiana*, we must point out to them, by the help of the divine Word, what they must *become*. Here, therefore, the question is not so much one of an expression of their Christian consciousness, as much rather of originating and implanting this consciousness, which is brought about by impressive exhortation and conviction. But this is, then, in the first degree, *an active*, extending treatment, one which directly offers salvation itself. Kübel ("Das biblische Predigtmuster"—The Biblical Pattern of Preaching—*Zeitschrift für lutherische Theologie*, 1873, ii. S. 229) says: "We confess ourselves (in opposition to Palmer) of the opinion that *preaching must be an essentially active process*, and that therefore its quality, in matter and form, must be determined, in the first degree, partly by Him who has appointed it, and partly by its aim, and the latter is, in brief, to bring the hearers to Christ, and forward them in Him."

It is a *fatal delusion*, when the congregation as such—the entire body of hearers—is assumed by preachers to be already essentially Christian, as standing in the personal possession of salvation; and when the preachers therefore do not actively impress, but merely express, or make themselves the mouth of the general sentiment. What is the consequence? THAT THE HEARERS FALL INTO SELF-SECURITY,

consider their dead orthodoxy, or, in rationalistic fashion, their outward Christian uprightness and honesty, as the true Christianity itself, and sleep on peacefully upon this pillow; for there no one any longer dares to touch the people on their most tender spot, where it would be most necessary, and there incisive preaching of repentance would be shrunk from as Methodism and Pietism. The meaning of *conversion and the new birth*, in sharp distinction from the worldly life, is never brought sharply to the consciousness of the people at all. The congregational spirit becomes a confused conglomeration of half-Christian, half-worldly tendencies, and the kingdom of God does not advance, but goes back. That I call *unfruitfulness*. And in such preaching *the inner harm even to the preacher himself* is no less great. There are not wanting examples that the Lord takes away His Spirit entirely (sometimes even suddenly) from him who, in order not to give offence, does not call wrong-doing by its right name; who, on account of the taste of modern times, rounds, as much as possible, the sharp corners of the corner-stone, and—since the fear of man is readily united with a certain vanity and desire to please—seeks by display of form, and striving after fine periods, to obtain the applause of the people and to hide from their superficial glance the bareness of matter.

Self-evident though these sentences may appear to the Christian, they are nevertheless much contested. One is astonished to read, from such a personally-believing man as Palmer, the following sentences (S. 13 ff.):—“Apostolic preaching had, like that of the missionary to-day, a real aim; the hearer was to be moved by it to become converted. Whether this can equally be made the aim of Christian preaching is questionable.” And why? Here one is, if possible, still more astonished at *the reasons*. Palmer says: “Our most faithful hearers are those ‘to whom the gospel is precious, for whom it is truth and life’; those, on the other hand, to whom it ought to be first made known, and proved as the truth of God, are outside, and hear us not. Hence there is nothing more absurd than to preach to those who are present such things as they already know.” How strange! The question is not about knowing merely, but chiefly about *doing*. The hearers may long have known quite well what I have to tell them as the message of Christ; but so long as they have not acted on it, so long must I

again and again exhort them to it. The assumption, however, is not at all true, that it is only those who love the gospel that come to church. There are always non-Christians present, quite worldly people, yes, and often unbelievers and even scoffers (if only out of curiosity).

When Palmer further says: "*The desire to compel, to urge to a decision, has, in matters of conviction and conscience, something intensely distasteful, importunity rather repels*" (S. 16), he not only forgets the command of the Master, "Compel them to come in" (Luke xiv. 23), which does not refer merely to heathen, or that very urgent address of Paul, which had almost persuaded an Agrippa to become a Christian (Acts xxvi.), but he overlooks also the fact that the actively importunate element in preaching only repels the hearer when he feels that the speaker *wants to convince him merely with human and artificial pathos*. This, indeed, leaves him cold, or repels him altogether; but if he observes that the Spirit of God flows forth from the speaker, that divine thoughts, illumination, spiritual flashes proceed out of his mouth, this will never repel him, but either overcome him or else inwardly convince him, even if he hardens himself. *The purely mental becomes tiresome to all hearers much sooner than active exhortation!* And if Palmer does not hesitate to say that this kind of preaching which aims at conversion, "which treats the hearers as ignorant heathen" (of course that is not at all its intention), is largely responsible for the antipathy to the Church, I meet him with the undeniable fact that *just in those places where preaching appears most as an active process, as "compelling," the antipathy to the Church is least*, as in England, Scotland, America, and even in some parts of Germany; that, on the other hand, in those places where the preacher no longer emphasises personal conversion, the churches soon become emptiest! At the same time, it must not be denied that unskilful, one-sided "Methodists"<sup>1</sup> and Pietists may repel many.

*All great, really successful preachers, from the apostles to the Harms, Hofackers, and Spurgeons of our day, have regarded their task as nothing else than an active extension and furthering of the kingdom of God.* And if any one wants, as Palmer

<sup>1</sup> *Note by Translator.*—The author is here not referring to Methodists, as the term is understood in England, but to a more extreme class who bear that name in Germany.

seems to do, to raise a doubt as to the result of active preaching, thousands can be produced who to-day acknowledge to the glory of God (not of men!) that, although previously baptized, confirmed, and not without Christian disposition and desire, they were nevertheless first awakened and converted through the instrumentality of this or that arousing preacher.

No! *unfruitfulness* will remain on that side where, by artificial, but quite unscriptural theories, the distinction between converted and unconverted in the congregation is obliterated, and thereby the one thing that is essential obscured in the mind of the whole congregation, and the narrow door widened as much as possible! *For it is to seal the unfruitfulness of modern preaching, when it is even laid down as a principle, that it must not compel the souls of men, must not be regarded as halicutie* (Schweizer, S. 118), must not fish for souls. Oh! how far we have gone in the theology and Church of to-day, when the abnormal, the modern state of sleepiness, the security of so many half-converted people is represented exactly as the normal condition—the resultless as the one true goal!

The representatives of the devotional, aesthetic, mental conception of preaching appear, however, to have felt something of the dangerous and, in its results, often fatal character of this one-sidedness. Hence the awakening, *practical, halicutie element is afterwards partly admitted*. Thus even Palmer comes round again, when he admits that the presentation of truth “may have now more of a didactic, and again more of a missionary character” (*Hom.* S. 19). Well and good, but then it is *no longer purely mental, but also ACTIVE*, a process resulting from a definite purpose and directed to a definite goal. Only there remains this difference between us and them, that they regard this *halicutie, operative side as the secondary one*, and the mental side as the primary one, as “the root of all homiletic activity” (Schweizer, S. 119), whereas we, on the contrary, regard the former as the chief thing, because the one great aim ever remains: To produce fruit for the kingdom of God. But this requires active preaching.

And that the latter conception is the true one is confirmed not only by holy Scripture, but also *by the history of preaching*. For where preaching became a dead form of worship without point and living operation, there, historic-

ally, the awakening element always broke forth again: in the Reformation time, in Methodism as opposed to the sleeping Anglican Church, in Pietism as against lifeless orthodoxy in Germany, and in the new life of faith since 1817 as opposed to Rationalism.

*Result.*

All reasons for placing the practical factor in the background behind the purely intellectual prove to be only apparent reasons, because they rest on a constant confusion of the ideal and actual congregation. That conception is condemned by the actual conditions of modern congregations, which absolutely demand an active, effective grasp of the will of the hearers: condemned by its consequences, since it everywhere proves itself to be unpracticable,—may, even confusing,—and leading the people to self-deception and self-security. It is condemned by the history of preaching, since the very greatest and most richly blessed of preachers never preached for instruction only, but always also for awakening—never merely declarative, but in the first degree operative: condemned by the present, in which so many still can testify that they have been awakened and converted by this or that effective sermon, even though they were long previously churchgoers and church members.



## CHAPTER II.

### PERSONAL REQUISITES FOR PUBLIC PREACHING.

#### PREFATORY REMARK.

INASMUCH as these requisites are partly ethical, partly natural, partly intellectual, and partly of external practical character, we could divide them according to these inward differences. But as they often cross one another, and in some cases cannot at all be separated (*c.g.* Bible study is partly ethical, partly intellectual in nature, and rests partly also on natural gifts: the call is partly divine, partly human, and so on), *we prefer a more gradual division, and one which also is in accordance with the sequence of time*, beginning and concluding with the most important ethical elements, and considering, in between, the elements which have proved themselves from the beginning to be necessary for the permanent activity of the preacher in a congregation.

#### 1. PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION, OR FAITH AND UNCTION FROM ABOVE.

Since preaching in its inmost nature is a bearing testimony, and its most effective operation rests principally upon the giving of a living and spirit-filled testimony (cf. Prov. xiv. 25, xi. 30), the fundamental requisite for the preacher is the *personal knowledge and experience of salvation or faith in his own heart and the anointing of the Holy Spirit* (1 Cor. ii. 10–16; Acts i. 8; Ps. l. 16, 17); for without that there is no true witness of the grace of God in Christ (1 Tim. i. 13, 16; 2 Tim. i. 12; 1 Pet. i. 3); without the Holy Spirit no spiritual witness-bearing

and fructifying are possible (John xv. 26, 27, vi. 63; Gal. v. 22; 1 John v. 6; cf. Ps. li. 13-15). The preacher whose sufficiency is not of himself but of God (2 Cor. iii. 5 seq., xiii. 5), who only as a *holy man of God* (1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Pet. i. 21) is fitted for the precious work of the preacher's office (1 Tim. iii. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 17), must therefore possess not merely a correct knowledge of saving truth, which is not enough even for himself, notwithstanding all development of human art and wisdom (Rom. ii. 20, 21; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5, i. 17), but an *experimental* insight into it—obtained through divine illumination—into its plan and connection, its worth, its divine power and renovating operation (1 Tim. i. 15). It is only he who himself has, that can bring forth out of his treasure (Matt. xiii. 52); only he who has himself been pardoned who can preach reconciliation with confidence (Isa. vi. 5-8; 2 Cor. v. 18-20; 1 Tim. i. 16); only he who is personally a believer has in his faith the true impulse, the inward truth, freedom, and joy to speak thereof to others also (2 Cor. iv. 13, *ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν*; John vii. 38), and besides this, can preserve in his fear of God the necessary fearlessness towards men. And it is only when the hearer hears from the preacher the voice of God (2 Cor. v. 20: *ὡς τοῦ Θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν*; cf. ii. 14; 1 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 11: *εἰ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λογία Θεοῦ*, cf. Matt. x. 20, and Jer. i. 9), recognises and feels the Spirit of Christ (Gal. ii. 20; cf. 2 Cor. xiii. 5), and sees in the preacher himself the personal evidence of the blessed workings of the gospel, that he can so yield himself to the power of the Word that he is thereby awakened and edified: whereas the unconverted preacher only in exceptional cases—through the superiority of divine truth over human error (Rom. iii. 3, 4), and through the divine wisdom which can even use the evil for good—will produce a blessing (Matt. xii. 30; Sir. xv. 9-12; cf. Braun, *The Conversion of Pastors and its Importance for the Efficiency of their Office*, 1885).

Many modern homiletes touch this principal point only cursorily, in contrast with the older ones (Rambach, cf. the preface to his *Præc. Hom.*), who insist on it much more seriously. They may expand the rules of art in their length and breadth: but that which from ancient times till now chiefly makes the preacher a preacher of God, his personal state of grace and the  $\piνεῦμα \Thetaεῶν$  thus acquired, this is *only mentioned in passing* as self-evident. They do not care to touch the conscience, and at all cost avoid the appearance of turning the lecturer's chair into a pulpit! That is a bad forbearance! Hence it comes that to-day *innumerable young homilists in Germany think that they can equip themselves for the preacher's calling with a certain measure of acquirement and facility*, and especially with homiletic rules learned off, and thus enter on the most responsible of all offices without being inwardly qualified for it! A great prophet, before he began his work of witnessing, had once to cry in deepest spiritual anxiety before God: "Woe is me, for *I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips*" (Isa. vi.), and another prophet once sighed, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child" (Jer. i.): nay, even on the holy apostles *silence was enjoined*, until the day of Pentecost was fully come, and they were endowed with power from on high!

Stier is one of the few homiletes who lay the greatest stress on the inward maturity. He says, amongst other things (p. 6 seq., 185 seq.): "He who preaches can and must always be only *the man who has had the new birth from God*. That is the most inward *fundamental* axiom of all genuine *Keryktik*,<sup>1</sup> which modern homiletic has only too often lost: upon it alone can the whole building of a commission, valid before God, to preach His word, be built, and it must be, down to the very smallest detail, the soul of all directions to be given on the subject." And it is equally true what Stier further says: "It is a very evil thing that in the place of the *gift of grace* for the preacher's office a *scholastic homiletic* has arisen which assumes—*i.e.* sets to one side—faith: for only he could formerly preach to whose seeking faith it was really given of the Spirit; but now very many who could not, out of their own heart of hearts, before the eyes of the Lord who is to be feared, speak three words in His name to a congregation, *cover this defect with*

<sup>1</sup> *Keryktik* (fr.  $\kappaηρῦσσείν$ ) = science of preaching. [Trans.]

*their artificial product*, as the theologian covers his unbelief with his orthodoxy. Oh, how one would like to cry to candidates for the ministry and to those ordained: Beware of the strange woman (rhetoric) who flattereth with her lips (Prov. vii. 5)! *Beware of the merely human art of preaching, and be careful to avoid the idea of being able to preach out of your own resources, with your fine voice and clever speech!* Ah, even if many a one could not preach so well in this way, it would be much more desirable that he learned it in the right way!"

An unconverted preacher is a combination of the most unnatural elements. He is like a blind man placed in a chair of optics, who has to describe light and colour and the laws of sight, and yet is himself in total darkness (Spurgeon, p. 5).

"Nisi spiritus sanctus intus sit, si doceat, doctoris lingua extus in vanum laborat" (Gregory the Great).

The classical work of Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (German, "Der evangelische Geistliche," Stuttgart, 1837), is highly to be recommended. There, *inter alia*, we read: "It is a fearful thing to be an unsanctified professor, but much more to be an unsanctified preacher. Doth it not make you tremble when you open the Bible, lest you should read there the sentence of your own condemnation? When you pen your sermons, little do you think that you are drawing up indictments against your own souls! When you are arguing against sin, that you are aggravating your own! . . . Oh miserable life! that a man should study and preach against himself, and spend his days in a course of self-condemning! A graceless, inexperienced preacher is one of the most unhappy creatures upon earth: and yet he is ordinarily very insensible of his unhappiness; for he hath so many counters that seem like the gold of saving grace, and so many splendid stones that resemble Christian jewels, that he is seldom troubled with the thoughts of his poverty; but thinks that he is 'rich and increased in goods and stands in need of nothing, when he is poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.' . . . Oh, what aggravated misery is this, to perish in the midst of plenty!—to famish with the bread of life in our hands, while we offer it to others, and urge it on them!"

In dealing with the Word of Life, one's own life should never be separated from this Word, if the latter is to prove

itself truly living and efficacious. Hence the first condition of all work that is to be blessed is personal experience of salvation and conversion. Hence the anointing of *the prophets* with the Holy Spirit, the conversion of the *apostles* from "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," down to Pentecost; then first could they bear living testimony. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i.). This remains to the end the only true order.

Bengel says: "A candidate for the office of the Protestant ministry should be able to show, on his induction into his calling, his certificate of spiritual birth," because an unconverted preacher cannot pray, and is therefore in his office like a bird with only one wing. It is a fact that success depends in the first degree upon the measure of the preacher's unction; when one receives a rich measure of new spiritual power and preaches the same truth in the same way as before, often hundreds are converted, whereas previously all was dead. The Spirit quickeneth. Even the ancient rhetoricians knew "that it was not the rules of art which produced the most convincing oration, but a personality identified with the truth of the subject" (Nitzsch, S. 34). *Pectus disertus facit*. This is doubly true of the testimony of Christian preaching. For in order to bear true testimony it is requisite to be able to draw from one's own inmost experience. Hence a person is required who is thoroughly imbued, filled with divine truth, who has experienced in his own flesh and blood that which he is to speak. A merely intellectual apprehension of the subject in spiritual things is extremely inadequate for the speaker, for it is involved *in the nature of these spiritual truths* that one only *learns to understand them thoroughly by yielding himself to them*, following them, and thus experiencing them in their saving power. And as this is necessary for bearing testimony, so also it is necessary for the obtaining of the Spirit, without whom there can be no spiritual begetting, no living fruit can be produced.

Hence, therefore, *the true operation, the blessed fruit*, is so often wanting. How is God to bless a preacher who continually misuses His name, because he bears it on his lips without faith, without true reverence? Or how is such a preacher to ask for a blessing, if he is no child of God, and

therefore cannot offer prayers that will be heard? The secret of blessing lies in this, that a complete personality filled with God and the Spirit, who has himself staked his all for the cause, works like a spell upon others. If *God alone* were to preach, without human intervention, we should stand astounded and startled: we could not hear it, like Israel at Sinai. But if the hearer hears *man alone* preaching, without at the same time recognising in him the Spirit of Christ, he feels himself as a fellow-Christian on a par with the preacher, and the sounding bell either remains ineffectual, or else embitters the hearer if it discloses to him sins from which the hearer knows the speaker himself not to be free: or the sermon becomes a sort of advocate's attempt at persuasion,—clever words, through which the cross of Christ is easily made of none effect (1 Cor. i. 17, ii. 4, iv. 20).

How, then, shall preaching be done? God—God's Word and Spirit—produces fruit, is the operative force; but *God through man*. In other words: It is the man anointed with the Spirit,  $\delta\iota' \omicron\upsilon\ \Thetaεο\varsigma\ \piαρὰ\ ζα\lambda\iota\epsilon\tilde{\iota}$ , the  $\sigmaυνεργ\omicron\varsigma\ \Thetaεο\tilde{\iota}$ , who speaks  $\lambdaογία\ \Thetaεο\tilde{\iota}$ , the personal truth and evidence of the truth proclaimed, who produces fruit, who involuntarily awakens sympathies in all who are still receptive, who makes all the nobler echords of the divine plan echo in the hearer, because the latter feels that the preacher has staked himself, his whole life, his future on the truth of that to which he urges others. Hence Prov. xiv. 25 (correctly translated), "Only a true witness can win souls," and xi. 30, "A preacher in God's wisdom wins souls." He who will conquer others must himself be conquered by Christ!

It is related of Origen (see Nebe, *Geschichte der Predigt*, i. 11), that being once on a passing visit to Jerusalem, and pressed to preach by the pastor of the place, he opened the Bible and read the passage Ps. l. 16, 17, "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction and castest My words behind thee?" Then he sat down and burst into tears, and the whole assemblage with him. That was the whole sermon. Would to God that to-day there was weeping at the sight of this text, where it is needed, in churches and in studies. Then the Church of Christ would be free from her greatest danger, her most serious evil—from unconverted and half-believing preachers.

One other question meets us here: Can an unconverted man win souls in certain circumstances or not at all? Certainly one who is striving after the full possession of faith may preach, even though he still has doubts on some points in his intellectual consciousness. He is not therefore a hypocrite, but it is true what a Herrnhut man once said to John Wesley: "Preach faith *until* you have it, and then you will soon preach it *because* you have it." But on fundamental points he should certainly have already come in his own mind into the light and to a firm conviction. "I believe, therefore I speak."

## 2. TEACHING GIFT AND HOMILETIC TRAINING.

As Christ Himself, even though in unique fashion, was specially anointed and equipped for His office (Ps. xlv. ; Isa. xi. 2-4, xlii. 1, lxi. 1 ; Dan. ix. 24 ; Matt. iii. 16, etc.), and next to Him the prophets and apostles (Jer. i. 9 ; Acts i. 8, ii. ; 1 Tim. iv. 14, etc.), so to-day for the public preacher—the διδακτικός (1 Tim. iii. 2 ; 2 Tim. ii. 24), who shall be able to teach others (2 Tim. ii. 2)—in addition to the personal experience of salvation, a special *gift of teaching*, a spiritual aptitude or skill in teaching, is requisite, through the bestowal of which God fulfils and declares the sovereign right of His choice for this calling (Jer. i. 5 ; 1 Cor. xii. 6, 11 ; 2 Cor. iii. 6 ; Eph. iv. 7, 8 ; cf. Rom. ix. 21)—a gift, the want of which, moreover, can never be supplied by diligence and study (Jas. iii. 1 ;<sup>1</sup> cf. 1 Cor. xii. 28). But this gift must not merely be awakened and cultivated (1 Tim. iv. 6, 14 ; 2 Tim. i. 6 ; cf. 1 Thess. v. 19) ; in order that the preacher may be instructed unto the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xiii. 52),—not a novice (1 Tim. iii. 6), but rich in all manner of knowledge and experience (Acts vi. 3 ; 1 Cor. i. 5, xii. 8 ; Phil. i. 9),—in order that he may be able to expound the Scriptures in all their many-sidedness and in a healthy spirit and apply

<sup>1</sup> The author's reference is to Luther's version, with which our R. V. corresponds: "Be not many teachers." [Trans.]

them in their inexhaustible fulness ever in new and worthy ways to the circumstances that arise (2 Tim. i. 13; Tit. i. 9 seq., ii. 1, 7, 8; 2 Tim. ii. 15, iv. 2; cf. Ps. lxx. 10), it must be sustained and improved by continuous studies—partly (as a rule) by a somewhat long *general intellectual* culture, abreast of the times, partly by a special course of *theological and homiletic* culture, which widen the horizon of the preacher so that he may adequately respond to the various demands upon him, and become all things to all men (1 Cor. ix. 19–22, xiv. 3).

This second requisite presupposes the first; for as Erasmus (*Eccles.* i. 4, 5) finely remarks: “Qui cupit juxta Paulum esse *διδασκῆτις*, det operam, ut prius sit *Θεοδιδάκτος* (1 Thess. iv. 9), *i.e.* Divinitus edoctus.” A gift of teaching may indeed be imagined *without true faith*, but not a *spiritual one*, and one that will really bring forth fruit, because in spiritual things the right knowledge, which is above all essential to teaching, cannot be separated at all from the personal experience. The early Christians only received the charismata after their conversion. Moreover, every gift is not a teaching gift, not even every spiritual gift. “There are diversities of gifts,” even though there is one Spirit. Here, then, the proof is necessary! The spiritual gift of teaching is not merely the gift of clear comprehension, of living, intelligible statement and exposition of the Christian faith, combined with a certain facility of placing oneself at the standpoint of others, but also the capacity to penetrate their true needs, to have always the right word at hand for the circumstances that arise, and to apply it in forcible yet worthy fashion. This is *something special*, not common to all, but bestowed by God, after His choice, for the special purpose of the teacher’s office. Hence it is just as wrong *not to use the gift, when it has once been bestowed*, for the common benefit, as to try to *force it or to feign it, where it has not been bestowed*, to the common injury. How often have these simple truths been ignored down to our time! How often the attempt is made by *work and study to purchase and to force spiritual gifts*, and it is often discovered too late, to one’s own hurt and that of his hearers, that a *false* course has been taken. How many used formerly to press into this office for external reasons, for the sake of honour or a



more speedy maintenance, without having questioned themselves as to any divine indication, as to the spiritual gift of teaching, as if it did not stand written: "My brethren, be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment." In such cases *the tremendous responsibility* of this office is forgotten—a responsibility which almost seems to crush an apostle (2 Cor. ii. 16): "Who is sufficient for these things?" It is possible for one with the most earnest diligence "to devour the marrow of the best writings and to read innumerable books, and yet in relation to spiritual capacity for teaching to remain as lean as Pharaoh's kine after they had eaten up the fat ones" (Bishop Sanderson). There remains a divine gift, and it is a specific which nothing else can replace. No office without inner call, no *χρῆσμα* (ordination) without *χάρισμα*!

But, on the other hand, the divine gift does not do away with human industry, but demands it. Culture, general and theological-homiletic is essential. Thus the *horizon is widened* for all spheres of life. We learn to understand the historical events of our own time better in the light of the world's history and the history of the kingdom of God. We are more on our guard against one-sidedness and confusion in the exposition of Scripture. Besides, theological training is a key to the richer opening up of holy Scripture, so that the meal in the barrel is not exhausted even with much preaching, but something new is always being added to the old. Wesley once wrote to a pastor: "Your talent for preaching is not growing; it is quite the same as it was seven years ago, because you do not keep up your studies. It is lively but not deep, without variety, without a more expanded range of thought. Without daily study, meditation, etc., you can never be a deep preacher. He who does not daily study and pray, remains a shallow preacher."

The demands on a preacher in our time are becoming larger and larger. The educated person will only submit to one who is educated; as soon as he sees that he is ahead of the preacher in culture, he readily thinks that he cannot learn any more from him in spiritual matters.

## 3. DIVINE-HUMAN CALLING.

For the ministry of the Word in the congregation the preacher, even if already converted and equipped with the necessary teaching-gift and culture, requires to-day a special call, an official authority. This is—

(a) *Divine*.—As Christ Himself appealed to His being sent from the Father (*e.g.* John viii. 16, 42; Heb. v. 4; cf. Isa. xlviii. 16, lxi. 1; cf. Matt. vii. 29), and the prophets (from Ex. iii. on) and apostles (John xx. 21; Acts iv. 19; cf. 1 Cor. xii. 28) appealed to their immediate divine commission as divine authority in face of the world (cf. especially the introduction to the Epistles of Paul from Romans i. 1 on, especially Gal. i. 1; cf. Eph. iii. 2; 1 Tim. i. 12; 2 Tim. i. 11, etc.), so to-day no one should enter the preacher's office unless he is sent (Rom. x. 15; cf. Matt. ix. 38), and knows himself to be an ambassador of Christ (2 Cor. v. 20). This, however, only in the sense that the preachers are divinely authorised to perpetuate the *proclamation of salvation*, not as priestly successors of the Mediator, nor as men of the personality of the apostles, who were sent *directly* by the Lord, and whose position (as living foundation-stones in the temple of which Christ is the corner-stone, Matt. xix. 28; Rev. xxi. 14) remains a unique one in the divine economy of grace. Hence the continuance of the apostolate in the sense of a hierarchical chain of apostolic successions is as unscriptural as it is inherently unjustified and unhistorical. The divine calling and commission of the preacher is, rather, only seen, *partly in that special spiritual gift of teaching*, the preaching charisma bestowed by the Lord, partly in the *sincere, inward desire*, free from self-seeking (1 Thess. ii. 4–9; Acts xx. 33; cf. Phil. ii. 20, 21), to dedicate himself to the distinct, clear impulse and leading of the *πνεῦμα*, to the witness-calling and nothing else (2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 1; Jer. xx. 7); partly also in *outward* appointments and indications on the part of the heavenly Chief

Shepherd of the Church through His representatives on earth.

If we hold fast the necessity of this inward divine call as the deepest foundation of the office, and of its official authority *in opposition to the frivolity* which would intrude, without a call, into the office, to the great injury of the people, just like the hireling (John x. 9; cf. Jer. xxiii. 21, 31, 32; Jas. iii. 1; cf. Num. xviii. 7), so on the other hand we insist also—

(b) *In opposition to sectarian self-will*, on the necessity of the *human call* through the regular offices of the Church (1 Cor. xiv. 33; Augustana, cap. xiv.), by whom the Lord completes his calling externally, and who on their side have in this matter to seek for and to follow the divine will. On the *harmonious co-operation of both* (Chapter I. 2, (b), (a)) depends not only the undivided authority of the office, but essentially also the *joy* of the preacher in the fulfilment of his task in the particular congregation, for which the divine call with his own training *inwardly qualifies him*, while the *human call* outwardly accredits him.

“But how shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Rom. x. 15). Hence the divine vocation is still in our day indispensable to every *joyful* and fruitful fulfilment of the office; and this becomes more and more necessary, as it becomes more and more possible—nay, actual fact—that the *proclamation of the gospel* in many places will be once *again hindered and persecuted*. For the word “Amt”<sup>1</sup> (according to the German Dictionary of James and William Grimm) signifies “a *scrutant* and companion standing behind or at one’s side for protection and assistance,” therefore = support, pillar, reserve. In the Old High German it is “ampahht,” one who stands in a relation of service. Hence, he has an “Amt” (office) = he has a backing, and this is the divine calling and the regular human commission.

Here we must lay down an important *restriction*. In connection with the question of the origin of the preacher’s office, we have above treated of the essential side, where we recognised the divine commission to preach as now handed

<sup>1</sup> The German word for “office.” [Trans.]

down through the Church as intermediary. Here the question is only about the personal relationship of the modern preacher to the original messenger of the Lord, *the question of the apostolical succession*. If we regard the continuance of the apostolate as unscriptural, and corresponding neither to the idea of the apostolate nor to history, the reasons are these: *This succession lacks even the external qualification*; for apostles must have seen the Lord and been sent by the Lord Himself. But we see nowhere a continuance of this kind of sending. This mode of divine appointment ceases with Paul, who places his apostleship distinctly in the fact that he had himself seen the Lord, and had been directly called by Him. To His apostles the Lord says: "As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you": but where do the apostles say to the elders whom they ordain: "As the Lord has sent us, so send we others, so send we you?" It is true, Paul writes (2 Tim. ii. 2): "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also," but that refers only to the necessity of a teacher's service and not in the remotest degree to a hierarchical chain of apostolic ordinations!

*But it lacks also the inner justification.* The position of the apostles in God's economy of grace is a quite *peculiar and unrepeatable one*. "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28). "The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. xxi. 14). This surely points to a quite exceptional position of the apostles, and one which is not handed on to others. Besides, their quite *special mission has been fulfilled by themselves*. In the strength of Christ "they planted in the world and its history the first churches, and endowed them with the essential thing which guarantees their existence, with the divine Word, now found in the permanent Scriptures" (Ehrenfeuchter, S. 151). That was their unique, special work, which does not require to be perpetuated, because in this legacy of the *sure word* the basis of all continuance of preaching was laid once for all.

On the necessity of the inward call Calvin says (*Instit.* iv. 3, 11): "Est autem bonum cordis nostri testimonium, quod neque ambitione, neque avaritia, neque ulla alia cupiditate, sed sincero Dei timore et aedificandae ecclesiae studio

oblatum munus recipiamus. Id quidem unicuique nostrum necessarium est, si volumus ministerium nostrum Deo approbare.”

Luther, on the other hand, in the following words exhorts to waiting for the call from without:—“Expecta vocantem; interim esto securus: imo si esses sapientior ipso Salomone et Daniele, tamen, nisi vocaris, plus quam infernum fuge, ne verbum effundas. Si tui eguerit, vocabit te. Si non vocabit, non te rumpat scientia tua. Nunquam enim Deus fortunat laborem eorum, qui non sunt vocati; et quamquam quaedam salutaria afferant, tamen nihil aedificant. E regione magna semper fecerunt, qui, Deo vocante, docuerunt.”

#### 4. DILIGENT STUDY OF THE BIBLE AND PERSEVERING PRAYER.

In order, as a faithful steward, to have always ready for all situations and circumstances a store of *διδασκαλία ὑγαιίνουσα* (Tit. i. 9), and to be able to bring forth out of his treasure not only things old, but also things new (Matt. xiii. 52), and at the same time to bear his testimony with the true God-given unction and joyousness, the preacher—mindful of the fact that, whether richly or feebly gifted, he can do nothing without the Lord (John xv. 5)—must ever seek, through *diligent* (Jos. i. 8; Ps. i. 2, 3, exix.; John v. 39; 1 Tim. iv. 13, etc.) and *humble* (Rom. xii. 3; 1 Tim. i. 7) *study of the holy Scriptures, and persevering prayer* in the preparation of his sermon (Matt. vii. 7–11; Mark xi. 24; 1 John iii. 22; Jas. i. 5 seq.; Prov. ii. 3–5), to obtain from above, new fulness, strength, and light, both in regard to form and matter (*στόμα καὶ σοφία*, Luke xxi. 15; John iii. 27). Otherwise the *ὁμολογεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ*, indicating the resting of faith in the Lord (even the Gnostic Harakleon noted the emphasis which the preposition *ἐν* gives to *ὁμολογεῖν*) (Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8; 2 Cor. ii. 17; cf. Col. i. 29; Ps. cxxxix. 5), and the fruit-producing *παρρησία* (*ἐνθέως—εὐθέως*, Bengel) are not possible. For the experience of all truly successful preachers is agreed in this, that it is never what is

produced by one's own strength and skill, or delivered in false self-confidence (1 Cor. x. 12), but only what is produced, under divine illumination, from Scripture and experience and asked of God (Jas. i. 17; Prov. ii. 6, 7), that is the truly impressive, fruitful, and for the preacher himself, elevating and inspiring element of preaching, by which even the material remains permanently inexhaustible, and his personal joy and freshness unaltered even with frequent preaching (2 Cor. iv. 7).

Here the rule holds good: God helps those that help themselves. Through devout meditation the Word has such a power of absorption that it is spiritually reproduced in us, and becomes thereby our own free property, which we can dispose in this form or in that, which we can divide and treat as we please. But it demands always a concentrated, intense, ethical-intellectual effort if we are thus to transfuse the text into our own flesh and blood.

Moreover, timid natures may fall into the mistake of taking it too much to heart, and being over-anxious, especially when several sermons follow one another closely. In this case it is well to have faith in the help of the Lord, who, when the time is scarce, can give so much more strength. There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few! Preaching is not difficult only, it is also easy, not merely forcing us to sigh, but also, on the other hand, the happiest work, according as we regard it from the side of human work or of the divine co-working. It is so much the happier, the oftener one has found that it is just what amid many sighs is born of the Lord that is most blessed, and that He, if we only ask Him seriously, can in the end turn for us also the water into wine.

The chief error of many preachers is that they torment themselves too much with study and pray too little. Hence their work often makes such slow progress: hence so little really abiding fruit of their labour.

Adam Clarke has said: "Study yourself to death, and then pray yourself into life again." Our whole work is really only a preparation for the Holy Ghost, preparing the way for the divine blessing. Hence humility is of such special importance. "He who does not stand in the pulpit with the sense of his own nothingness, has not been sent

by God: humility is the true robe" (Mallet). Hartmann (*Leben*, S. 111), a professor and preacher of the eighteenth century, who as a boy and as a student had been exemplarily pious, writes in his diary as a young preacher: "It is necessary that before every entrance into the pulpit I should ask pardon of the Lord Jesus for entering this place, because I do not belong to it, and am too unworthy with regard to the past, and too unsuited with regard to the present."

Prayer is just as necessary after preaching as before it, and not merely prayer for blessing and fruit, but also for protection against vanity that the blessing may not be hindered or diminished. There is perhaps nothing here below more delightful than the sense of peace after a successful sermon, if the clock long and well wound up still continues to sound within itself, but here we must be on our guard lest the great enemy of souls destroy all through vain expectations. Let us then here give the glory to the Lord for all that has been successful, and keep for ourselves only the imperfect, the mistakes, for they alone belong to us entirely, God having no part in them! A sermon which has been a failure, however, has at least this advantage, that it keeps us humble. It is well when we come from preaching and still remain in the lively and vigorous frame of spirit thereby aroused, ready to make *a beginning for the next discourse*. Therefore "*rejoice with trembling!*" Yes, let us indeed tremble when the bell rings and the hymn begins: this is quite wholesome and necessary for us. But close by is the word: "*The Lord is at hand.*" Let that be our comfort. Cicero somewhere says, that if anyone treads the rostrum for the first time and does not feel as if he were going to execution, he will never make a good orator! But let us not tremble before men only, but still more *before God*. Baxter says that for years he entered the pulpit in the fear that he might not leave it alive: his knees shook under him, not from fear of the faces of men, but because he had to preach *in the sight of God*—"as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ" (2 Cor. ii. 17).

Let us make up our minds, that for an effective and useful sermon, much more depends upon prayer and Bible study, upon faithfulness in great things and in small, upon zeal for the Lord and especially upon humility, than upon talents and gifts, indispensable though these also are.

5. A SYMPATHETIC AND IMAGINATIVE SPIRIT IN THE TREATMENT OF SCRIPTURE AND IN OBSERVING THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PEOPLE.

In order to the thorough exposition and practical application of the text to the present day, the preacher must be able, on the one hand, vividly to transplant himself into the scenes of holy Scripture and the connection of the text, and, on the other hand, to enter sympathetically into the special circumstances and needs of his own congregation. This readiness to transplant oneself into strange circumstances—which is not merely a gift, but really also a fruit of ethical self-discipline in the all-embracing love of our neighbour, and through which alone it is possible to commend the truth to every man's conscience (1 Cor. ix. 19, 22; iii. 1, 2), and so to *ὀρθοτομεῖν* (2 Tim. ii. 15)—demands a certain *elasticity of spirit, an excitability of mind and of imagination*, especially of the inward world of ideas, from which comes at once the right change of discourse (Gal. iv. 20) and that directness of feeling, that freshness and variety of statement and illustration, which alone can permanently hold the hearer and make both the general and particular comprehensible to him, and which are essential to a lasting edification. The preacher requires therefore, that he may not beat the air (1 Cor. ix. 26), an *exact knowledge of the circumstances of his people*, which, in addition to what has already been mentioned, is a chief source of material for his sermons (see Chapter III.), but which he can only acquire through faithful watchfulness of individual souls, and that sympathetic love which alone has the true sharpness and delicate sense required for observation (cf. Mark vi. 34; Col. iii. 12). Only in this way will the preaching in the congregation, as it ought, take *root in the life* and bring forth fruit for the life.

Whence comes it, that even a personally believing preacher, who is not wanting in the requisites previously



mentioned, often arouses people so little by his preaching, leaves them so cold and dry, nay, almost wearies them, that they are glad of the Amen? He lacks the elasticity of spirit, the liveliness of mind and of imagination, which transplants itself into the text, extracts skillfully the leading thoughts, feels them, and then with secure grasp derived from his own knowledge of the people's circumstances, finds parallels in the present, and goes on to apply the truths of Scripture with fresh, vivid statement and illustration to the particular circumstances. Without this special gift, without this many-sidedness of perception and adaptation, it is scarcely possible, Sunday after Sunday, to arouse and to edify. The preaching then easily becomes monotonous, stiff, something along the beaten track, which wearies, because the people have soon learned all that he has to teach. Thus not enough of the new is added to the old. And the monotony of the matter soon communicates itself to the whole discourse, even to the very gestures.

In opposition to this we must remember the words (Gal. iv. 20), "I could wish . . . *to change my voice*," now joyfully to proclaim and speak with winning kindness, now to teach and exhort, now to rebuke and alarm, now to speak words of promise and comfort. What a *difference in the tone of Christ's voice* between "Blessed are the poor in spirit," or, "Come unto Me all ye that labour," and "Woe unto you scribes!" or between the serious warning, "Except a man be born again," and the overflowing of peace and love in "I am the Good Shepherd." And whence this variety? Because He, through His compassionate shepherd love, could enter so vividly into the circumstances of all!

For the same reason it is necessary that the preacher should enter into the life of the people, and be well acquainted with their circumstances, needs, sins, and gifts. What happens in the congregation must touch him closely; he must rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with those that weep; he must condescend to men of low estate. And from this source he will always have fresh material for his preaching.

As soon as the hearer perceives that the preacher is thoroughly well acquainted with *him and his special circumstances*, needs, thoughts, dangers, hindrances to spiritual growth, his evil or good habits, that he has put himself really in his place, *then he listens to him gladly*, he perceives

that he can learn and profit. But if he feels that his pastor only speaks in a general way, and does not really know where his chief danger, his besetting sin lies, then he involuntarily thinks: "Yes, he may talk as he likes; he knows nothing of my case, what enemies I have to fight with," etc., and the sermon passes over his head.

Hence, therefore, *observation and special care of individual souls* are required; but observation, not in the spirit of particularising or of Pharisaism, which sees nothing in its neighbourhood but heathenism, but with *the eye of love*; it has the finest, keenest sense of observation. The sympathetic look of Jesus is needed: "When He saw the multitude He had compassion upon them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad," etc. (Matt ix. 36). Hence Bengel: "Boni doctoris virtus est misericordia." The exhortation holds good: "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering," etc. (Col. iii. 12). The more faithful the care of souls, the more material for preaching. Where the former is weak, the latter will soon be unfruitful. The most successful preachers have always been good pastors also. But here we require not merely house to house visitation, but also *a certain liveliness of mind and spirit*, adapting oneself to the thoughts and circumstances of others, and then to speak, to state and apply the truth as from that standpoint. And this power is not merely a gift, but is also *the fruit of true culture*; it enables one to speak with each person on his own platform of education and intelligence, to illustrate the truth with figures which come quite easy to him, to give milk to babes, and strong meat to those that are mature.

These daily observations and experiences the preacher should be able to arrange with a lively imagination, for it is this that chiefly gives the fresh fragrance to the statement of truth, and becomes, innumerable times, the mother of thoughts which are new, and which rivet the hearers.

Spurgeon enters with the most facile imagination, with the freshest, directest sympathy, so fully into his text, that he almost sees the figures of it in bodily form before him, and from this standpoint he depicts them so clearly, and moulds them in such plastic fashion before the spectator, that they live in bodily form before him also, and impress themselves upon him in a way never to be forgotten. With

the same case he then enters also into life, and illustrates with the most striking examples from the daily actions of men, so truly, that we see the men whom he wants to describe as if embodied before us, and think he must have just met them thus, and listened to them on the way to Church.

#### 6. MORAL AND AESTHETIC TACT.

For the preservation of decorum, both in expression (Eph. iv. 29; Col. iv. 6: *ὁ λόγος πάντοτε ἐν χάριτι*, cf. Ps. xlv. 3) and in tone, gesture, manner (*κόσμιος*, 1 Tim. iii. 2; Prov. xvii. 24), and generally in our whole appearance before a congregation, especially before an educated one, *a certain moral and aesthetic tact and instinct* is the more desirable, as the general rules to be laid down for the formal side (see chap. iv.) cannot always cover all special cases, and yet the want of this *εὐπρέπεια* only too easily spoils the service, especially for the more superficial minds, which often attend too much to the form.

Observe here *the incomparableness of Christ!* How dignified He is in all His discourses, in the most kindly condescension, in declaration of truth, in words of comfort or of exhortation, as well as in the anger of rebuke! At this point, then, we urge the similar observance of a certain dignity, which remains conscious of the sacredness of every church duty. *Everything must preach in the preacher*, not merely the tongue, but also gesture, manner, dress, walk, and conversation besides. These cannot be quite covered by any rule; one requires, through *ethical imitation of Christ*, *an ever-growing instinct and tact*, which will know how to do the right thing in each particular case.

#### 7. A HOLY AND DISTINCTIVE WALK.

More important still than the last-named requisites is this, without which all the rest lose their influence, that for the holy words *the personal holy walk* of the preacher should furnish a commentary which all the world can read, like a song without words accompanying in harmonious

echo the Shepherd's call (2 Cor. vi. 4-6 ; 1 Tim. iii. 2 seq. ; 2 Tim. ii. 15, 24 ; Tit. i. 6 seq. ; 1 Pet. v. 1-3, etc.). Not only can the preacher obtain and go on enlarging the necessary material of spiritual experience for awakening and edifying preaching in a godly life alone (Matt. xiii 52 ; 1 Tim. iv. 8), but without the *συνειδησις καθαρὰ* (1 Tim. iii. 9) the true impressive *παρρησία* for bearing witness and the real holy earnestness will also always be lacking. Hence in our day it is more than ever of importance to keep oneself by Christian firmness of character, not only from the enfeebling and inwardly troublesome influences of worldly life, but also, by continuous personal piety, from the timid fear of men and men-service, and by the sole following of Christ and His apostles (1 Cor. iv. 16 ; 1 Thess. i. 6 ; 1 Cor. xi. 1) from popularity-hunting imitation of men. The more completely the instrument is sanctified, the more richly, because unhindered, can God work by means of it ; the purer the vine, the more fruit it brings forth (John xv. 2). Only as *an example to the flock* (2 Thess. iii. 9 ; 1 Tim. iv. 12 ; Tit. ii. 7 ; 1 Pet. v. 3), not merely teaching the commandment, but doing it (Matt. v. 19), only as the living realisation and personal representation of the dignity and blessedness of the Christian's calling, can the preacher permanently enjoy the authority to influence his hearers profitably, whilst to him who preaches to others and is himself a castaway (1 Cor. ix. 27 ; cf. Matt. xxiii. 3), both God's blessing and the respect of men will soon enough be lacking. The hearer is only too ready to use the faults and neglect of the preacher as a fig-leaf for his own nakedness. Hence the sins of the pastor are the greatest in the Church, because they do most to hinder the course of the Word of God.

Even Seneca says (epist. 6): "Longum iter est per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla." *Verba docent, exempla trahunt.* "The preacher's life, like a magnet, should draw the soul to Christ. The pillar of fire which led Israel to Canaan, not merely shone, but also went before them"

(Spurgeon, *Lectures*). "In three ways should the preacher preach: with heart, with mouth, and with life. The life must prove what the mouth speaks, and the mouth must speak what the heart feels" (H. Müller, *Apost. Schlusskette*, S. 63).

That which in the old covenant was signified by the special washings and purifications of the priests down to Mal. iii. 3, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi," is to be shown under the new covenant in the special and diligent attention of the preacher to personal holiness. On him all eyes in the church are turned. Hence it should be possible to read in him, as on the forehead of the high priest, "Holiness to the Lord" (Ex. xxviii. 36). Without a holy walk with a good conscience, there can be no inward *ἕξουσία*, no real *παράρ-ησία*, no impressiveness of preaching, no gathering of spiritual experience.

No preacher will produce permanent fruit if he has not become an example to the flock. How many a one thunders powerfully in the pulpit against sin and speaks very tenderly of the blessings of eternal life, but as soon as he comes down "we see in him neither the strength to conquer his own sinful heart nor the desire to enjoy for himself the highly-praised spiritual blessings. It is as if his Christianity had remained stuck to the gown he took off. He is once more the witty companion, the jolly man of the world." And if he does not even make an effort to be that which he points out to others, no one will do it. How beautiful, on the other hand, when Gregory of Nazianzen can say of Basil that his preaching was like thunder, because his life was the lightning to it, and when it was said of the Reformers, "The truth not merely sounded, it shone out of them."

"Take heed to yourselves," says Baxter (*Reformed Pastor*). "One proud, surly, lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action, may cut the throat of many a sermon. . . . It is a palpable error of some ministers, who make such a disproportion between their preaching and their living: who study hard to preach exactly, and study little or not at all to live exactly. All the week long is little enough to study how to speak two hours: and yet one hour seems too much to study how to *live* all the week. . . . Take heed to yourselves, because the tempter will more ply you with his temptations than other men. If you will be

the leaders against the prince of darkness, he will spare you no further than God restraineth him. . . . Take heed to yourselves, because there are many eyes upon you, and there will be many to observe your falls. You cannot miscarry but the world will ring of it. The eclipses of the sun by day are seldom without witnesses. . . . Take heed to yourselves, for your sins have more heinous aggravations than other men's. . . . Your sins have more hypocrisy in them than other men's, by how much the more you have spoken against them. . . . Your sins have more perfidiousness in them than other men's, by how much the more you have engaged yourselves against them. . . . Take heed to yourselves, for the honour of your Lord and Master, and of His holy truth and ways, doth lie more on you than on other men. . . . Would it not wound you to the heart to hear the name and truth of God reproached for your sakes. . . . Oh, take heed, brethren, of every word you speak, and of every step you tread, for you bear the ark of the Lord—you are intrusted with His honour! . . . Take heed to yourselves, *for the success of all your labours doth very much depend upon this.*" God has therefore also care for His servants, and to the means which He uses to make their work successful, belong especially even *painful personal experiences*, in which some passage of Scripture becomes specially important to us, its inward meaning then being revealed to us for the first time. For this also belongs to the preacher's office, that for the sake of the souls intrusted to us we willingly endure it, that in the furnace of affliction the Lord should write with glowing letters His Word on the so often feeble and lukewarm heart, in order that we may be able to speak of it with greater fire—yes, that in our very tears He should give us a glass through which we may read the best commentary on His Word, namely, that which is written by the Holy Spirit on broken hearts to which the Lord is near.

## CHAPTER III.

### MATERIAL AND CONTENTS OF THE SERMON.

THIS material is (1) divinely given, being contained in the holy Scriptures, especially in the gospel; (2) determined also by the Confession and custom of the Church; (3) demanded by the special needs of the congregation; (4) and also determined personally, *i.e.* to be explained and expanded by the preacher out of the treasure of his own individual belief, of his spiritual experience and practical wisdom.

#### 1. THE CONTENTS OF THE SERMON AS DIVINELY GIVEN, OR THE HOLY SCRIPTURES AND THEIR HOMILETICAL EXPOSITION.

Here we first look at the *main contents of* Scripture as the fundamental material for preaching, consider the particular parts of Scripture to see whether they supply a larger or smaller share of this material. We then inquire how this fundamental material is to be turned to account (*the homiletical exposition of Scripture*), and, after the statement of rules for the choice of a text, the general considerations for the practical interpretation of Scripture, and then the way to fidelity to the text and exhaustive treatment of it will be discussed. Then, finally, we shall state the general principles on the other aspect of exposition, the homiletical *application of the text*.

(a) *The Holy Scriptures as the source of Homiletical Material.*

HEUBNER, *Christliche Topik oder Darstellung der christlichen Glaubenslehre für den homiletischen Gebrauch*, 1863.

GAUPP, *Homiletik*, S. 86 seq.

STEINMEYER, *Die Topik im Dienst der Predigt*, 1774 (1 allg. Teil).

BEYER, *Das Wesen der christlichen Predigt nach Norm und Urbild der apostolischen*.

(a) THE GOSPEL HISTORY.

If the holy Scriptures are the record of the divine revelation, especially as the "representative witness for the appearance of Christ Himself" (Schweizer, S. 197), the fundamental material of Christian evangelical preaching, yet this cannot be said of them in all parts equally. For if *Christ*, His person and His redeeming work, is the centre-point of all Christian preaching (as we saw in chap. i. 1, (a)), then those Scriptures which describe His life and teaching, His doing and suffering, *i.e. the Gospels* form above all others, even above the Epistles, the fundamental material for preaching. But even in the Gospels a difference is unmistakable in the proportion of their contents, which is important for their homiletic use. In other words, certain *facts of salvation* and doctrines stand in the foreground as the kernel, as the inalienable, all-supporting stem of the gospel, whilst other circumstances and doctrinal statements appear only as a subordinate part of the work. Among the former we shall have to reckon all those parts of the gospel narrative, to which the whole of Scripture points over and over again, forwards and backwards, as the essential elements of God's revelation of salvation in Christ, and of the mediation and reconciliation brought about by Christ between God and men—*Christ's birth, the fulfilment of the law and the prophets in His redemptive work, His sufferings and death, His resurrection and ascension, with the outpouring of the Spirit* in the Acts of



the Apostles. Upon these fundamental facts and the *doctrinal teachings of Christ* which accompany them—*about the kingdom of God* and the conditions of *entrance into it*, about *God the Father*, about *Christ's own person* and the *Spirit*, about *sin and redemption*, about the *way of salvation* and the *free grace of God*, about *repentance and faith*, *conversion and regeneration*, about the necessity of *sanctification*, the certainty of the *judgment to come*, the coming of *Christ* and the future *establishment of His Kingdom*—Christian preaching must be built as its indispensable foundation, if it is not to cease to be scriptural and evangelical. For the specific novelty and distinction of the subject of Christian belief is the new relationship of men to God in grace and peace, brought about by the person and work of Christ—the fact of the world's redemption and reconciliation through CHRIST as the only way of salvation.

To the *less important facts*, on the other hand (*narratives of the second rank*, Palmer), belong those passages of the Gospels, which under certain circumstances might be lacking without altering essentially the substance of our faith, and which therefore, in and for themselves, were not in the same way necessary to the work of redemption, although even they reflect the glory of the Son, *e.g.* the dedication in the temple, the flight into Egypt, the washing of the feet, some of the miracles of healing, etc., and also those discourses, the understanding of which is not absolutely necessary to the attainment of salvation, and which, because they were usually called forth by special circumstances, do not admit of such universal and direct personal application as the former (*e.g.* Matt. xix. 11, 12, xix. 21; Luke xii. 11, 12; or Matt. xvii. 20, etc.).

The essential part of Christianity is objective: *Christ Himself*, and the story of salvation proceeding from His Person: *faith in Him*, as salvation made manifest, the experience and application of this story of salvation in our own hearts. Christianity wants to lead men back into God's fellowship on the ground of the redemption and reconciliation, which have

been accomplished *by Christ*; it denies that any other way leads to this goal but the grace of Christ—"I am the Way." Acts iv. 12: "Neither is there salvation in any other." This is the specific novelty, and consequently the heart and centre, of the whole teaching of Christ and the apostles!

If, then, Christ is the centre of Christianity, it follows for us that the fundamental material of Christian preaching is formed, before all else, by those writings which describe Christ's living and dying—the *Gospels*. The Scriptures are, at the same time, not equally a source of material for preaching; one will preach more frequently from the Gospels than from the Apocalypse, from the Psalms than from the Book of Esther. Luther's saying holds good here: "This is the true touchstone, to see whether the books of Scripture treat of Christ or not, since all Scripture points to Christ." No book, however, so treats of Christ as the Gospels; hence they are, above all else, the mine for homiletic material. It was therefore not quite logical of Luther (and after him a great part of the Lutheran Church) that, notwithstanding the above canon, he gave *the preference to the Epistles above the Gospels*. In his *Kirchenpostille* (see a Christmas sermon on Titus ii.), Luther says, for example: "In the Epistles of St. Paul the gospel is clearer and brighter than in the four Evangelists." And this preference is easy to understand, because the doctrine of justification is not expressed in the Gospels in such definite dogmatic form, and therefore this dogma cannot be so easily developed on their authority.

So also even Claus Harms (*Praktische Theologie*, i. S. 6) tries to deny that the Gospels are more suitable than the Epistles. And Spangenberg says: "Of the kernel of the gospel, the death and blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God slain, and all that flows from and depends on this, there is not so much to be found in the Gospels as, for example, in the Epistles of Paul." This, again, is explained by the dogmatic speciality of the Herrnhuters, their well-known preference for the theology of blood and the cross. But this must not confuse us into refusing to give the first place to the Gospels, although in many places in the united National Church of Prussia the Epistles are read before the Gospels, which we cannot recognise as the right order. For the Epistles are themselves an exposition, expansion, a sort of sermon on the facts of salvation, and hence those

books which actually contain the history of those facts must be their foundation too.

If, however, we consider in a book whether it treats of Christ, so also must we distinguish *within the Gospels between the essential and less essential*, the central and that which is accessory.

It may, indeed, be said: In the gospel everything hangs together, nothing in it is unessential. Certainly. In the case of the world's Redeemer, even the smallest deed is important; in the mouth of Him who is the Truth itself, even the smallest utterance is significant and weighty for all time. We should not like, for example, to miss any of His miracles; for each one manifests the glory of the Son of God, and is therefore strengthening to faith. In the whole of the narrative of salvation we dare not lose anything; and it is certainly not without a Divine Providence that it has happened, that just this and that have been preserved for us.

But the very fact that *all the deeds and sayings of our Lord have not, by a long way, been preserved*, that the apostles and disciples *in their records made selections* from the mass of recollections and traditions (John xx. 30: "Many other signs did Jesus, which are not written in this book": xxi. 25), shows that the apostolic age itself knew how to distinguish between essential and less essential passages. The former were afterwards embodied in the *Credo*. The latter found no place in it. The former are those to which the Scriptures point over and over again, forwards and backwards, which are always recurring or assumed in the teaching of the apostles—the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ and His sending of the Spirit. These, then, are the *constituent elements of our faith, the foundation pillars*, which would remain standing even if the other portions were wanting, and the belief of which would be sufficient for salvation, even if the rest remained somehow unknown to us. But the latter are such as would be quite useless without the former, and therefore in their homiletic treatment always presuppose the former as their foundation, and which prove themselves *less necessary to the work of redemption* by the fact that—especially with regard to teaching utterances—they admit of *no such general personal appropriation* as the central truths of salvation.

For examples of the first class, see Palmer, 6 Aufl. S. 103 seq., and of the second, S. 134 seq.

(β) HISTORY AND TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES.

Although narrating no essential facts of salvation except the ascension and outpouring of the Spirit, *the Acts of the Apostles*, with its description of the mother church, of her founding and development, with accompanying signs and works of salvation, of her inner warmth of life and self-purification (Ananias, etc.), of her sufferings and persecutions, of her mutual understanding in case of doctrinal differences in the spirit of truth and love (Acts xv.), of her missionary zeal, especially as embodied in Paul—with its examples of fidelity to the faith and preaching power on the part of the apostles, is so rich both in the Petrine and Pauline sections in primitive manifestations of the life of the Christian community in all its activities, that it has at all times yielded an inexhaustible mine of homiletical material both for mission and congregational preaching.

The *apostolic Epistles*, as the first and freshest exposition of the fundamental truth of the gospel, and as the development and enrichment of the same by the Spirit, who was to lead into all truth (John xvi. 12–15; cf. 1 Tim. iv. 1), are at once *model* and *material* for homiletic exposition and application. As a statement of doctrine by the first Spirit-anointed witnesses, as the earliest application of the gospel proceeding from the deepest knowledge and experience of salvation to already formed congregations, they contain both in their *didaactic* parts, built on the clear ground of the gospel or special revelations of Christ (from which some rather subjective views are to be separated, as Gal. iv. 24 seq.; 1 Cor. vii. 12 seq., “say I, not the Lord”; Jude 9), in the development of the *doctrine of Christ's work and the application of redemption*, of the doctrine of sin and grace, faith and justification (cf. the essentially *soteriological* epistles to the Romans and Galatians), of the high-priesthood of Christ (Hebrews), of the Person of Christ (cf. the essentially Christological epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians), of the Church and congregation, their spiritual

life, their internal order and discipline (cf. the essentially *ecclesiastical* epistles to the Corinthians and the pastoral epistles), of their relation to the Old Testament past (cf. Galatians, Hebrews, James), of their relation to the present (the three epistles of John), and to the future up to the end of the world (the two epistles of Peter, Jude, and the essentially *eschatological* epistles to the Thessalonians), and generally in everything which helps to the clearer definition of the faith in opposition to errors of a judaising or paganising kind, and in their *hortatory* or *practical sections* for the various offices, positions, and members of the churches (cf. especially the pastoral Epistles)—a rich, important, and, for application to the circumstances of our Churches of to-day, a very specially appropriate store for homiletical treatment.

On the other hand the *Apocalypse*, that prophetic history which shows us in panoramic fashion the world's development, down to the world's end,—however much in its opening vision, in the seven letters to the Churches, partly also in the middle parts (chaps. iv. and v.; vii. 9–17; xii. 10, 11; xiv. 13), and especially in the concluding visions of the end of the world and establishment of the kingdom of God (chaps. xix.–xxii.), it supplies contributions for the text of a sermon which are incomparable and indispensable of their kind,—in its intervening visions, on the chronological exposition of which there is still so little unanimity, is homiletically applicable only with the greatest care and discretion with regard to particulars, and with conscientious holding-fast of that which stands assured according to the teaching of other prophetic Scriptures, and especially in accordance with the statements and prophecies of Christ Himself.

The Epistles are especially instructive for the homilist in this respect, that they so beautifully combine as a rule with each *dogmatic, didactic section a practical hortative one*. Both must mutually support and help one another. For this reason the Epistles are such an inexhaustible mine for homiletic use, even if they do not quite touch the depths

of the *discourses of the Lord Himself*, of which this is the incomparable glory, that the didactic, dogmatic, practical, ethical and hortatory are united with such wonderful depth, simplicity, and naturalness, that *each of his utterances always combines these elements*, an ideal which the homilist and catechist must study to strive after with all his energies.

With regard to the *Revelation of John*, the middle part of it is more appropriate for exposition in an intimate circle, and perhaps for Bible-readings, than for the chief sermons on Sunday. We are indeed freely asked by good but curious people to preach on the Beast in the Apocalypse, the Millennial Reign, and so on, but this is for the most part only pious prying, which, if one were to yield to it, is not contented, but rather begins to feel itself really aroused. If, however, anyone wishes to do this, and perhaps preach through the book on Sunday evenings or at the week-day service, let it be done with moderation and prudence. Even in the case of a man of great spiritual power and much insight into the kingdoms of both nature and grace—*Öttinger*—it happened that he prophesied from the pulpit with great confidence much that has never taken place, which of course can only do harm, even to sermons that are not Apocalyptic. At the same time, as *a book of comfort* in times of trouble, and *of warning* for times of declension, the Revelation is, in the parts specified, incomparable even for homiletic use.

It may be further asked whether, as we use the history of the kingdom of God down to this completing end, we should not also make *the history of the Church* in general a subject of preaching. George Gessner of Zürich published sermons of this kind in 1818–1820: *Schicksale der Wahrheit unter den Menschen oder Predigten über die Hauptzüge der Geschichte des Christenthums bis auf die Reformation* [“Destinies of Truth amongst Men, or Sermons on the Leading Features in the History of Christianity down to the Reformation”]. There are also Couard’s Sermons: *Das Leben der Christen in den drei ersten Jahrhunderten* [“The Life of Christians in the three first Centuries”], Berlin, 1840. But we shall see below that a definite Bible text is indispensable to evangelical preaching. For *edifying illustration* of a Scripture text, the history of the Church, the life of the Reformers, etc., yes, God’s working generally in the history of the world, offers material enough for the homilist, but to take a portion of non-biblical history as the foundation of a

sermon and thus to lift it into the rank of a text which is expanded and applied, *is contrary to the Lord's command to preach the gospel*, and is unnecessary, even when much preaching is done. The history of the kingdom in the holy Scriptures contains, in fact, material enough and variety enough for all congregational circumstances and conditions of life, and besides offers a margin in which materials from Church history (especially on festivals of the Reformation, memorial days, etc. etc.) can be largely interwoven.

(7) THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE APOCRYPHA.

Even of the Old Testament the general rule holds good, that no book found in the Canon is *à priori* to be excluded from the selection of texts; but the selection is here limited more than in the New Testament, by the rule that at the very outset *the difference in the times and in the divine economics of redemption must be carefully observed*, and the permanent is to be distinguished from the temporal. Thus there are events which "lie close to the most external boundary of the *sacred history*" (Nitzsch, S. 71), *e.g.* passages in the Book of Judges, the history of Samson and what is connected with it (chap. xiii.–xxi.), in the Book of Esther, also in Ezra and Nehemiah, and, further, peculiarities which are only of importance for the Mosaic legislation, or which cannot be at all homiletically treated without arbitrary allegorising (*e.g.* the register of the camps in the wilderness, several genealogies, etc.), or even narratives of offences against morality, the public treatment of which is forbidden both by moral good sense and regard to human weakness. These are not suitable for texts, whilst for the *didactic and prophetic books* the limitation holds good (as for the Revelation of John), that passages on the actual meaning and interpretation of which there is absolutely no unanimity as yet in the Church (*e.g.* "The Song of Solomon," and many prophetic sections, especially in Ezekiel and Daniel), cannot be applied as texts for preaching without "a certain amount of error"

(Nitzsch), and that, generally, all passages should be considered from this point of view, whether they *breathe a truly biblical spirit*, helpful to the progress of revelation, and relating to the coming salvation, or, on the other hand, remain hard bound in the particularistic limits of Old Testament conceptions (*e.g.* the imprecatory Psalms xxxv., lii., lviii., lxix., cix., cxxxvii., and similar passages).

It is not, however, a good sign that, especially in Germany, partly as the result of the lectionary compulsion and also of the Schleiermacher spirit of distaste for what belongs to the Old Testament, evangelical preaching turns less and less frequently to that part of Scripture. Nevertheless the Old Testament is essentially a *history of redemption*, consisting of a series of divine revelations in deed and word, whose value and importance, especially in regard to the words of prophecy, by no means ceases with the fulfilment of its principal contents by the appearing of Christ. The complete connection of the history of the kingdom of God, of the progress of revelation, of which Christ is the Alpha and Omega, cannot be understood without the statements of the Old Testament on *primæval history*, without those sublime pictures of human history (Gen. iv.—xi.), without the *types* of New Testament salvation contained in the law, the history, and the prophets. Hence, therefore, the New Testament in its complete meaning, looking forwards and backwards, cannot be fully turned to account homiletically without our being absorbed in the Old, while, on the other hand, it is only in the light of New Testament fulfilment that the depths of the Old Testament revelation in history and doctrine are fully revealed for evangelical preaching, which, “no less than Christian poetry, requires the material of the prophets and the Psalms in order to contemplate and individualise with vivid power the thoughts of the gospel” (Nitzsch, S. 72).

Specially appropriate for homiletic treatment are all utterances of God in which, from patriarchal times, He



proclaims Himself to His people as *Deliverer, Father, Shepherd*, and *Helper*: *the Decalogue*; *the Messianic prophecies*, especially those sections of Isaiah that treat of the righteous *servant of Jehorah* which bring into prominence the human side of the Mediator; and also the prophetic descriptions of the Church and of the New Testament conditions of God's people down to the new heavens and the new earth (*e.g.* Isa. ix.—lxvi.; Jer. xxxi.; Ezek. xxxiv. and xxxvi.; Joel ii. and iii., etc.). Besides this *objective* individualising of the biblical-evangelical conception and expectation of salvation, a remarkably rich and grateful material for homiletic treatment is afforded by the *subjective* contemplation of it, the description of the inmost personal life of faith, as expressed in the praise and supplication, lamentation, vows, and thanksgiving, especially of the Psalmists (particularly so in the penitential Psalms; and also in Ps. xxii., xxxvi. 6–11, xxxix. 5–13, xlii., xliii., xlv., lxxiii., xc., cxviii.; the songs of degrees cxxi., cxxvi., etc.). So also from the Proverbs of Solomon, an exposition partly on the more speculative, partly on the practical, homiletic, and didactic side, can draw varied nourishment (*cf.* Bindemann, *Die Bedeutung des Alten Testaments für die christliche Predigt* [“The Importance of the Old Testament for Christian Preaching”], 1886).

As in the case of the New Testament Scriptures we have to consider whether they treat of Christ, so in those of the Old Testament the question is whether a *genuinely biblical spirit*, if not directly Messianic, yet *helpful to the progress of revelation, pervades them*. This is the principal criterion. That, accordingly, many passages are not homiletically applicable, is self-evident for everyone who recognises the difference between the universality of Christianity and the particularism of the Old Testament economy. At the same time, it is undeniable that under this particularistic covering, necessary for that time, a *kernel of eternal, universal application* lies concealed, which, wherever it is perceptible, may be homiletically applied, and enriches in no small degree the textual material of Scripture. We shall indeed

find, to mention the most central point, that in particular *the holiness and grace of God are not yet really brought together*, as indeed they could not yet be; that between these two boundary and characteristic marks of divine revelation and activity the whole history of the people, like the life of the individual believer, fluctuates to and fro; and that also the picture of the Redeemer, although almost all its individual features are prefigured prophetically or typically, is presented to us in single and detached portions, and only "on the highest pinnacles of prophetic insight is a complete whole to be seen" (Palmer, S. 186). The knowledge and expectation of salvation is everywhere individualised, and we must not expect to find in these individual features the complete fulness of the New Testament revelation exactly as if it was already fully contained there, as if we only required to develop it from them, but we must supplement and fill up these somewhat abrupt outlines by the central conception of salvation contained in the New Testament. The Old Testament platform of revelation must certainly not, therefore, be over-estimated in its importance for Christian preaching, but its actually existing limits are to be recognised.

There is, however, in Germany much more necessity *rightly to urge preachers to the homiletic use of the Old Testament*, than to warn them against the excessive application of it, as was for a time the case in England. By many German preachers the Old Testament is almost never used as a proper text for the basis of a sermon, but at the most, single passages are quoted from it in the course of the sermon. Hence the *striking ignorance of the Old Testament among our people*, even among the educated.

The neglect of the Old Testament in the case of many preachers arises partly from the compulsion of the lectionary, especially in Württemberg, where the Old Testament is almost never preached from on Sunday, partly also, no doubt, from the influence of Schleiermacher, the many high excellences of whose sermons do not cover the defect which resulted from his distaste for that which belonged to the Old Testament.

The consequence of this neglect is, however, not merely that ignorance on the part of our people, but also in the case of many preachers, *a certain monotony and uniformity in their preaching*. By not using the Old Testament they deprive themselves of a mass of colours and tones, which in

certain circumstances might lend much freshness and vital warmth, and especially more variety, to their style of preaching. Yes, *the homiletic exposition of the New Testament itself suffers injury thereby*, because, without being imbued with the knowledge of the Old Testament, it lacks the complete survey of the history of redemption as a whole, of the gradual development of salvation, and the infinite wisdom of God in the education of humanity.

And yet what *a rich mine this is* for homiletic application! How rich is the history of Abraham, of Joseph, of Israel from the Exodus from Egypt on, of Moses, of David, of many of the prophets from Samuel to Jeremiah, in features which can be turned to account homiletically in the most fruitful way, which are particularly suitable for consecutive treatment in week-evening addresses or in the sermons of Sunday afternoon or evening! How kindly, for example, just at the beginning of the march through the wilderness, is the sound of the gospel of Mara, "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Ex. xv. 26). How inexhaustible in texts is the *treasure-chamber of the Psalms*. Let us take, for example, that little "nightingale among the Psalms," outwardly so insignificant and yet so melting in its tenderness—the 23rd—"The Lord is my Shepherd," this angel of comfort which for 3000 years has poured into countless wounded hearts a healing oil and breathed an inward peace, or that solemn majestic 90th Psalm, which, like the sound of a bell, shakes our soul on New Year's Eve, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth," etc.; or those tears of penitence and sighs of David in the 51st Psalm, which still in our day put the right words upon the lips of innumerable sinners when they approach God with burdened conscience: and many other such. How great is the variety in these subjective aspects of the life of the Old Testament believer, as in the objective descriptions and prophecies about the people of God and the coming redemption!

Among the literature of Old Testament sermons, which is at last beginning to be somewhat richer in Germany, the following may be mentioned:—F. W. Krummacher, *Elia; Elisa; David, der König von Israel*, 1867; W. Hoffmann, *Stimmen der Hüter im Alten Bund* ("Voices of the Shepherds in the Old Testament"), Berlin, 1856; Val. Herberger, *Magnalia Dei, die grossen Thaten Gottes* ("The great deeds of

God"), parts i.-vi., "Das erste Buch Mose ausgelegt" ("An Exposition of Genesis"), Halle, 1854; Menken's *Homilies and Sermons*; Caspari's and Ahlfeld's *Sermons on the First Section of the Catechism*, 1852; Friedr. Arndt., *David, der Mann nach dem Herzen Gottes* ("The Man after God's own heart"), 1836; Bender, *Alltestamentliche Lebensbilder in Predigten* ("Old Testament Pictures from Life, in Sermons"), 1857; Bückmann, *Die Nachtgesichte des Sacharja in sechs Predigten* ("Six Sermons on the Visions of Zechariah"), 1858; Voswinkel, 14 *Predigten aus dem Leben Abrahams* ("Fourteen Sermons from the Life of Abraham"), 1860; Voswinkel, 50 *Predigten aus dem Leben der Erzväter* ("Fifty Sermons from the Life of the Patriarchs"), Gütersloh, 1872; Disselhoff, *Die Geschichte König Sauls* ("History of King Saul," 1860-1867), und *König Davids* (1862-1868), *Ruth*, 3 Aufl. 1871; Deichert, *Der Stern aus Jacob* ("The Star out of Jacob"). A complete year's course of Sermons on Nitzsch's Old Testament Lessons, 1867; Kögel, *Aus dem Vorhof ins Heiligtum* ("From the Poreh to the Holy of Holies"), 1875-1880; E. Frommel, *Die zehn Gebote Gottes in Predigten* ("Sermons on the Ten Commandments"), 3 Aufl. 1885; Wunderling, *Uraltes und doch ewig Neues*; 1 Band, *Predigten über das erste Buch Mose*; 2 Band, *Predigten über das zweite bis fünfte Buch Mose*; 3 Band, *Predigten über prophetische Texte des Alten Testaments* ("Old, yet ever New"; first two volumes, "Sermons on the Five Books of Moses"; third volume, "Sermons on Prophetic Texts of the Old Testament"); Christlieb, *Predigten über den Segen des Herrn* ("Sermons on the Blessing of the Lord"), 2 Aufl. 1878; Mühe, *Alltestamentliche Evangelien aus Moses Leben* ("Old Testament Gospels from the Life of Moses"), 1883; Dieffenbach, *Bibelandachten*; 4 Band, *Geschichte der Urwelt und des noachischen Bundes* ("Bible Meditations"; vol. iv. "History of the Primeval World and of the Covenant with Noah"), 1884; Spurgeon, *Alltestamentliche Bilder* ("Old Testament Pictures"), 1884-1886. For further particulars about Old Testament sermon-literature, see Bindemann, *Bedeutung des Alten Testaments für die Predigt* ("Importance of the Old Testament for Preaching"), 1886, S. 265 et seq.

*The Apocrypha*, which even in the historical aspect are lacking in the equal value of their history for the economy of redemption, and which—because they appeared after

the extinction of prophecy in Israel—sometimes betray a spirit anything but biblical-evangelical (*e.g.* Tob. iv. 11, 12, vi. 9; Ecclus. xxix. 15, 16; and hence the *Roman Catholic Church* has reason for placing them on a level with the canonical books even for preaching purposes), whose didactic books, keeping more to the surface of life, contain rules for all kinds of special cases and circumstances (and hence the *Rationalists* availed themselves especially, almost preferably, of texts from the Apocrypha for sermons on the duties of life), for the same reason which led to their exclusion from the Canon, *are not admissible as the foundation-text for preaching.* At the same time, it is not to be denied that many portions of them breathe a genuine biblical spirit, and reveal a meaning identical with that of the Canon, because deduced from it (*e.g.* Ecclus. v. 8, xviii. 22, 26, xl. 1–4, xli. 3, 4, xlv. 16; Wisd. iv. 14; Bar. iv. 19, 20, 23, etc.)—passages which are admissible not only for quotation, but also as texts for *addresses on special occasions*,<sup>1</sup> whilst for the regular preaching service the fundamental rule must be strictly observed that only canonical passages are admissible as texts.

With reference to the former controversy on the admission of the Apocrypha as a text for preaching (on which cf. Bleek, *Einführung ins Alte Testament*, S. 314 ff.; *Ueber die Stellung der Apokryphen*, S. 354; Stier, *Ueber das Verhältniss der Apokryphen zur heiligen Schrift*, reprinted in *Gesammeltes aus der Zerstreung*, S. 22 ff.; Palmer, S. 198), it may only be remarked that we may carry the anti-apocrypha feeling too far, prompted especially by an exaggerated conception of inspiration, as in England, where the apocryphal books are almost unknown. We do not admit them for the Sunday service, but for occasional addresses. Who will deny that passages like “Humble thyself before thou be sick, and in the time of sins show repentance” (Ecclus. xviii. 21): “From morning until evening the time changeth, and all things are speedy before the Lord” (xviii. 26); and “Enoch pleased the Lord and was translated, being an example of repentance

<sup>1</sup> The German word is *Kasualien*—addresses on such occasions as baptisms, marriages, funerals, etc. [Trans.]

to all generations" (xliv. 16), afford suitable homiletic starting-points in cases of sudden death? Or, "Great travail is created for every man" (xli. 1, etc.): or, "O death, how good thou art to the needy" (xli. 3, etc.), at funerals of poor, aged persons? Or, "Go your way, O my children, go your way, for I am left desolate. I have put off the garment of peace, and put on me the sackcloth of my petition: I will cry unto the Everlasting as long as I live" (Bar. iv. 19, etc.), excellent material for addresses at the burial of children?

### *Result.*

It follows, therefore, in accordance with what has been above (chap. i. 1) stated on the conception and aim of preaching, that the homiletical material in the complete range of holy Scripture is everything that relates to God's revelation of salvation in Christ, that advances and prepares the way for it, that sets it forth and continues it, that prophesies its fulfilment, that explains it in history and doctrine, that applies its meaning and its consequences to individual circumstances of life; now, more historical and didactic, leading to clearness in the knowledge of God and salvation, or, more speculative and mystical, affording glimpses into the mysteries of the divine kingdom; now, ethical and psychological, leading to the depths of self-knowledge and knowledge of sin, purifying and sharpening judgment and conscience; now hortatory, laying hold of the will, giving practical directions for the fulfilment of the Christian life-work, and going into a detail which finds its limits only in decorum.

In this kernel of *biblical material for teaching*, in the one *διδασκαλία ὑγιαίνουσα* which permeates it all, *but not in scientific dogmatics* and their *loci communes* (cf. the dogmatic-polemical preaching from the second half of the sixteenth century on), is the fundamental material for homiletics contained. It must be drawn from the original, and not from a secondary, source. Only through a constant familiarity with Scripture, and ever keeping in view the practical tendency of scriptural truth, does the preacher attain to the possession of this material for teaching, and,

therewith, of the necessary apparatus which will make every sermon an "*emanatio scripturarum*" (Bacon of Verulam, *De augm. scientiarum*, l. c. ix. 1), i. e. in the treatment of a particular text will cause the whole Scripture to shine through it as one great fundamental text (Stier, *Keryktik*, S. 73). But for extracting instructive material from the particular text and its practical application we must be directed partly by the homiletical exegesis of the text (see below (*e*), (*β*)), and partly, on the formal side (chap. iv.), by the *special topic*, through consideration of the "points of view from which an insight is possible into a particular truth" (Steinmeyer).

(b) *General Considerations on Homiletic Choice of Texts.*

It may be laid down as the first requirement for Protestant preaching (in this respect different from that of the Roman Catholics, cf. chap. i. 3 (*a*)), that *every sermon must have for its foundation a biblical text (textus, contextus sacer*, the name used by the Latin Fathers for the holy Scriptures in contrast with the homily, the *tractatus*, and the commentaries). This limitation is both *in the interest of the preacher himself*, who in this way alone can secure true confidence and joyousness as well as the necessary authority for his testimony in relation to his hearers, *and also in that of the congregation*, which must have therein a security that only divine truth shall be preached to it. For the preacher thus makes the profession that *his preaching is to be and must be biblical*, and the latter vindicates itself as the outcome of the divine Word, or else, in the event of the sermon failing to be this, the text itself becomes the judge of the sermon. And hence, because the Word of God is to be proclaimed in its own authentic character, *Church formularies*, confessions, hymns, or sayings are not suitable *for independent texts* of sermons, but are to be made serviceable in their expansion, and brought occasionally into the light of the text. For as

the sermon itself is something deduced from the text, the latter cannot be also something derived, but must be something original. On the other hand, the above rule, of necessity, does not apply to all addresses on special occasions. True, it is an advantage, even in this case, if the preacher finds a Scripture text, illuminating the particular occasion in all essential aspects to which he can confine himself, and this is quite necessary if the "occasional address" is given in the Church in presence of the congregation. But inasmuch as in these cases the event itself requires exposition as a fact sent by God, and therefore a kind of "actual text" (Palmer, S. 304), and as this interpretation is not often found concentrated in a single Scripture saying, but requires the collocation of various passages, the preacher does not need to bind himself always to *one* particular text. But his best plan will be to blend the detached passage with the discourse itself, without treating them precisely as *texts*, since in its true conception the text can only be *one*. In this way the discourse partakes more of the character of an *address* than of a sermon.

Similarly Stier (*Keryktik*, S. 81 ff.); Palmer, (S. 302 ff.); Nitzsch (S. 70). Cf. Harms (*Pastoral Theologie*, i. S. 65) had considerable pleasure in preaching without texts, and gave indeed some samples of it in the *Sommerpostille*, for which, however, it would be very easy to find a text, but which, at the same, time we must acknowledge to be biblical, just as, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that many a sermon which has a text is quite unbiblical. He says, however, himself (*Pastoral Theologie*, i. S. 6) that he would only let that be done in exceptional cases.

Certainly we must leave sermons without texts to the Roman Catholics, whose homilists often reckon the text among the "less essential elements of the sermon."

If we have already been obliged to find the fruitful efficacy of preaching principally in its character of testimony and the *παρρησία* associated with it, so in the very interest of this must we insist on a Bible text as essential. Whence, otherwise, is the joyousness of the preacher to arise in



appearing as the ambassador of Christ before the congregation? whence the necessary authority and impressive power in relation to his hearers? Every candid preacher will often have the experience that, when he follows more his own thoughts, he proceeds with more or less uncertainty, but when he draws from the text, he feels firm ground under his feet, and can bear a joyous testimony.

The text is equally necessary as *a guarantee to the congregation of the scripturality of the sermon*, the congregation, as Christian and evangelical, having the right to expect that only the truths of Scripture shall be proclaimed to it. "If anyone, however, preaches unscripturally, his text will condemn him" (Palmer, S. 303), and thus the badness of his discourse is revealed just by its collocation with a text. The congregation has *in the text the necessary touchstone for the scripturality of the sermon*, or even a corrective for an unscriptural sermon. Hence we understand why before the Reformation the people so often hurried out of the church after the reading of the gospel, without waiting to hear the sermon (which consisted of absurd stories of the saints, etc.).

That sermons—or let us rather say church addresses—may be biblical even without texts has been shown, for example, by Luther in his eight days' consecutive sermons against Karlstadt and the iconoclasts (1522). But these are clearly exceptions.

The above requisite of a secure guarantee for the scripturality of a sermon carries with it this also, that *only the written divine Word itself*, and not Church formularies, even though they were ever so directly deduced from it, can be the text of a sermon. *The sermon is itself something secondary, and hence the text must not be so also.* We cannot therefore approve, for example, of the instruction given some years ago to the Lutheran missionaries of the Leipzig Mission in Trankebar, to preach in the afternoon on the Augsburg Confession. Even the heathen have a sacred right to drink directly from the fountain of the Word.

It may be readily asked if it is not at least permissible to preach on the *Apostles' Creed*, which, since its substance, the *regula fidei*, the baptismal formula, reaches back to apostolic times, is not after all to be absolutely forbidden. But the particular articles of it are at the same time more appropriate for *subjects* than for texts; they are really subjects only, and hence it is better to put before them

as text a passage of Scripture containing the particular doctrine.

With regard to the *combination of several texts*, even for Sunday sermons, this is often done. Thus Dräseke (*Predigt für denkende Verehrer Jesu* ["Sermon for thoughtful Worshipers of Jesus"], iv. S. 5) once grouped *four* somewhat long passages together under the title "Love to Jesus," and another time three texts with the subject: "Peter in three Aspects;" W. Hofacker (*Predigten*, S. 93), three sayings of Abraham "On New Year's Eve": and Burk (*Sammlungen zur Pastoral Theologie*, S. 153) even recommends a plurality of texts for the sermon.

I would only, however, be disposed to admit it *when they are really the necessary complement of one another*, or illustrate one another as prophecy and fulfilment, and then never more than two, otherwise the hearer will not easily see the wood for trees, and will get no clear idea, because no one fundamental conception.

In the *choice of texts* (on the lectionary question cf. below, under 2), by which alone the preacher reveals his character quite plainly, so far as regards the contents of the passage, we have, above all, to see that it is *awakening and edifying*, and, at the same time, for the hearers of different sexes of all degrees of life and education, and hence that it not merely stands in such connection with the central truths that it makes possible an unforced reference to them, but also especially that it provides *for the (particular) inner need of the congregation* the spiritual food that is exactly suited to it (cf. the unprofitable passages indicated in (a), (γ)). Hence attention will be given, now more to simply historical or didactic texts, now and then also to those that go deeper into the hidden doctrine of Scripture, and again more to those that are pre-eminently hortatory (cf. Steinmeyer, *Topik im Dienst der Predigt*). At the same time, *we must avoid the one-sided favouring of certain pet subjects*, and always subordinate our own personal preference to the spiritual need of our hearers, in order that the congregation may have proclaimed to them the whole counsel of God for their salvation (Acts xx. 27),

the perfect will of God (Rom. xii. 2), and may have brought before them throughout the whole year the most important facts and truths of redemption, in an order which has regard to the Church year and its festivals. Along with this also regard must be had to the *capacity* of the hearers, and a corresponding choice must be made between strong meat and milk (Heb. v. 11-14; 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2). In the case of congregations that are as yet not far advanced mentally and spiritually, the treatment, for example, of difficult and especially speculative passages like John i. 1-4; Rom. ix. 11, easily becomes unfruitful.

As regards the *quantity*, the text should neither be *so small* that it has to be pressed and drawn out by artificial interpretation into breadth and length, nor, on the other hand, *so large* that the preacher finds himself compelled, either to a somewhat superficial skimming over the text or to a prolonging of his sermon beyond the usual church limit of half an hour to an hour. In the case of small texts, we must therefore see to it that their special treatment is justified by the depth of their contents; in the case of larger ones, that their subject can in the given time be unfolded to a complete whole, and concentrated again in a definite statement. Comprehensive passages, on the other hand, like the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, John xvii., Romans xii., 1 Cor. xiii., etc., are, as a rule, to be appropriately *divided*, ὀρθοτομεῖν (2 Tim. ii. 15), for the sometimes necessary and profitable summing up of them in *one* discourse presupposes a considerable amount of practice and skill.

Along with these objective conditions we must also include as a co-factor in determining our choice the special *subjective excitement* of the homiletic personality, the inner impulse produced by a present study of the Scriptures and acquiring the force of a germ of testimony, for it is only when a text has grasped us that we can be certain that we have grasped it. At the same time, it must be carefully

noted that it is only a choice which has been made *before God* that touches the heart, and therefore in the last resort the preacher has less to determine himself than to allow himself to be determined from above (Isa. xl. 6-8, cf. Luke xxi. 15 ; John iii. 27 ; John xv. 26 ; Acts xvi. 6).

Cf. Stier (*Keryktik*, S. 84-88), Nitzsch (S. 75-77), Schweizer (S. 186-191).

In the choice of a passage of Scripture the first point to be considered is whether it is *for edification*, and *suited to the needs of the congregation*. For real edification, however, an unforced *connection with the centre* of all preaching, Christ, is absolutely necessary. It will therefore, for example, not be easy to preach to edification on the description of the leviathan (Job xlv.), as we already above excluded, as unsuitable, from the general preaching-material of Scripture such somewhat remote subjects, especially in the Old Testament. Yet the idea of *edification is not to be too narrowly construed*. Not merely that which operates upon the conduct is edifying, but all that induces anyone to surrender himself to Christian views, feelings, and efforts (Schweizer, S. 190).

“Concionator materiam deligat utilem, facilem, necessariam,” says Hyperius strikingly (ed. *Wagnitz*, S. 25); it is true the whole evangelical doctrine is useful, but by far the most profitable for the congregation is always that by which faith, love, and hope are furthered. This is, and certainly will remain everywhere, edifying *par excellence*.

Here, also, because we have not, after the fashion of the Roman Catholics, so-called class-sermons, we must take care that the material be edifying for *all our hearers together*, and not for particular classes of them. The latter is not, however, to be absolutely excluded, only it must be in the right place and at the right time; for example, a sermon for servants should rather be on Sunday afternoon or evening, when more servants are at church than in the forenoon. Above all, the *present need of the congregation* is generally to decide us, within the limit of edifying material, and the knowledge of these spiritual requirements is to be thoroughly acquired only by personal pastoral care [*Seelsorge*—“cure of souls,” Trans.]. Hence the principal sins and vices which stand in the way of God’s kingdom in the congregation are

to be well kept in view, and to be opposed with ever new weapons from Scripture: the principal dangers and temptations are to be ever discovered again, and illustrated by Scripture examples, etc., but in such a way that the *One Way* to salvation, Jesus Christ, is always made prominent.

*All personal preference for particular portions of Scripture* must always be rigorously subordinated to these spiritual needs, whether they be for awakening or edifying, so that a one-sidedness may not arise which not merely makes difficult the understanding of revelation *as a whole*, but may often lead to considerable aberrations from the centre of faith. There are innumerable preachers who do not sufficiently guard themselves against this. Thus it becomes difficult for evangelistic preachers to treat of any other subject than conversion, and hence many choose—year in, year out—hardly any other passages from Scripture than narratives of conversion, or texts which have this as their aim. So also there are preachers *zealous for the law*, who make almost every sermon a sermon on repentance, choosing corresponding texts, and forget that hearts are most effectively melted by the cross of Christ, by the manifestation of the love of God in Christ. So also there are *apocalyptic preachers*, whose pet theme is the Second Coming of Christ, and who, for the sake of their prophetic studies, almost always choose prophetic texts on the signs of the times, the approaching judgment, etc. So also there are *æsthetic preachers*, who carefully avoid a sharp text on repentance, and hardly ever wish to speak of repentance, conversion, and the new birth; who are afraid occasionally to plough a little deeper, that they may not be obliged to make distinctions between the members of their flock, lest they should give offence to anyone, and especially lest they should seem too blunt to the rich and genteel; and who, therefore, never choose terrifying passages as texts.

In opposition to this we have to hold fast by our obligation to give our people the *complete truth of God in Scripture, the presentation of a full salvation in Christ*. If we want to be able one day to lay down the shepherd's staff in peace, we must be able to say with the apostle: "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for *I have not shunned* to declare unto you *all the counsel of God*" (Acts xx. 27). With the help of the Church year we must embrace it all, so that at least nothing

essential shall be overlooked. Now we must choose penitential texts, now comforting texts, now historical, now prophetic, now more didactic, now for the sharpening of the conscience, now for the strengthening of faith, now aiming at progress in knowledge. Only thus shall we adapt ourselves to all the requirements of the congregation.

Nitzsch (S. 77) thinks that we ought to choose our texts "according to the law of association, so that the effect of previous discourses should be completed and enhanced by subsequent ones"; and it is indeed well when the latter is the case. Yet, especially for the Trinity season, too narrow limits must not be imposed on freedom. Reference to previous addresses is often very profitable and edifying; but a sermon does not need to be exactly linked on to those that have preceded it, unless we are giving a series of continuous sermons on a somewhat lengthy passage.

*To preach through a whole book of holy Scripture* is indeed very desirable for understanding of the Scriptures; but it is better suited to evening or week-day sermons than for the principal service on Sunday forenoon.

To handle *difficult, speculative texts*, especially before country congregations, in such a way that a real understanding of them and a profitable result shall be produced, requires not only doctrinal clearness, but also much practical skill. For beginners, prudence in this respect is much to be recommended. Let us make our hearers eager to understand even such passages in order that they may strive to grow in knowledge and experience, until they can bear even strong meat.

In respect of *quantity*, two extremes are to be avoided: Not too small, but also not too large texts! When, in England for example, we often hear a sermon only on the half, yes even on the third of a verse of a Psalm, such texts, unless they are of a specially deep import, are rather *too small*, so that all kinds of lessons have to be *forced out of them, i.e.* to be forced into them, for which the text gives no warrant; and then this is not exposition, but imposition of Scripture.<sup>1</sup> When, for example, some one preaches on the text, "I am the Way," or on the words of the Psalm, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven," nothing can be said against this, for here we have rich, yes, inexhaustible meaning; but this is not the case with every verse or half

<sup>1</sup> The German is: *Keine Schriftauslegung, sondern Einlegung.* [Trans.]

verse. Then much has to be dragged in by head and ears, which never edifies, but distracts, because the divine support of Scripture is lacking.

But, on the other hand, *too large texts* are also harmful: partly because they do not easily lend themselves to a comprehensive unity of thought, and *make a complete and thorough division difficult*, and partly because they make an exhaustive treatment of the text impossible, and necessitate either a superficial or a quite too protracted discourse. The best sermon, if too long, produces no further edification, but fatigues and even embitters. It was the well-known *homiletic axiom of Luther*: "Step boldly forward, open your mouth well, stop soon!"<sup>1</sup> In this matter much depends on *Church custom*; for us Germans, *half an hour to an hour at the very utmost is quite sufficient*, and "whatsoever is more than this, cometh of evil." Oetinger (*Ehmann*, S. 383) says: "He who preaches more than half an hour is a fool; he preaches away again in the second half-hour that which he has preached in the first." For a Scotchman an hour and a half's sermon is often not too long. Much *too long texts* are unfortunately to be found *in many lectionaries*, which must be compulsorily preached from. For example, in the first year's course of the Württemberg lectionary for the Third Sunday in Trinity, on Matt. v. 1-16 (all the Beatitudes and a little more); on the Fourth Sunday, v. 17-48; on the Fifth, vi. 1-18 (Almsgiving, Private Prayer, and the Lord's Prayer), etc.

It is, indeed, instructive to hear a sermon occasionally on the whole of such a passage, but this requires a considerable skill in homiletic treatment.

Notwithstanding these objective conditions, *the subjective personality of the preacher* has also a certain right to share in determining the choice of a text. A text may be "as a burning fire in his heart and in his bones" (Jer. xx. 9), so that he must speak of it. If it is of such a kind as to be profitable, and suitable to the needs of the congregation, let him choose only as his text the passage which seemed to him important. At the same time, let him not forget that *he has to ask his Lord about it*. If in anything we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is specially in the choice of a text. It is only the choice which is from God that tells.

<sup>1</sup> Here also the word-play of the German can hardly be reproduced. It is "Tritt keck auf, thu's Maul auf, hör' bald auf!" [Trans.]

Our choice must ultimately be decided by the divine "must." The less it depends on our own arbitrary judgment, the better it is. Of course, however, *the divine indications by no means exclude*, but actually include, *man's independent meditation*. Without individual, humble searching, no one will "have a text given to him."

Thus *in the choice of a text the circle narrows itself more and more* to the point to which God wants to bring us. First, all that is unprofitable is excluded; then within the range of what is profitable we exclude everything that does not correspond to the needs of the congregation, and have reference also to the particular season of the Church year. Then, within the circle of the appropriate, we exclude that which is not suitable in quantity, which is too small or too large. Further, within the range of the suitable, we exclude that which has not taken sufficient hold of ourselves, which has not become sufficiently important to our own mind, and which therefore could produce no really joyful *testimony*; for within the germ of profitable testimony, suitable for time and circumstances, we seek until the Spirit of God more or less plainly turns the scale on one particular side; this, then, *the preacher chooses, or rather this he recognises as acceptable to God*. So, guided by God's finger, he makes the right, successful, fruit-producing choice!

### (c) *Textual Homiletic Exposition.*

#### (a) GENERAL CONDITIONS OF PRACTICAL EXEGESIS.

That a connecting link—*i.e.* an interpretation or exposition—is needed between the Word of God rooted in history and its relation to the present is clear from the fact that the holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament, the Word of God to the *whole* Church, is plainly universal, and therefore gives the Word only in the form of a seed, which, under the guidance of the Spirit, must be developed and brought to perfection by the Church. The exposition may, however, vary according to its aim. Practical exegesis, which is to serve not the knowledge of the learned, but the aims of Christian life in the Church, and which at the same time presupposes the work of a severely scientific,



grammatical-historical exegesis, has so to expound the meaning of a passage of Scripture that its significance and application for the world's life, and Christian life in general, and therefore for the present in particular—the full *intentio spiritus Sancti* (Hyperius)—shall be more in the foreground, with a wider scope and more ethical application than is required by purely philological exegesis; that therefore the deep and saving truths contained in it shall be spiritually perfected on all sides, and considered and applied with reference to the special circumstances of modern congregations. This is done either by the simple treatment of it as an example, type, or doctrine, from which we have to learn truths that are of universal, and therefore for us particular application; or in such a way that the particular passage is taken as the picture of a general thought, of a truth that is permanent in the life of the Church and the individual, and applied to the actual conditions of the present, in which case the historical fact may well be allowed to remain as the foundation. The latter is the permissible art of allegory and of so-called moral symbolising, both of which, however, must never become a fixed fashion, and must always, if possible, be kept within the limit of biblical symbolism. Biblical typology is distinguished from this by the fact that it limits itself to seeing in the principal facts and bearers of revelation on the lower platform, *i.e.* in the Old Testament, prototypes of facts on the higher platform of Christ.

Further, the work of practical exegesis is to discover and make plain to the hearer, in the close blending of doctrinal and ethical, partly the individual elements, partly the full scope of the thought that lies in a passage of Scripture, and its soteriological tendency. This is to be done by the translation of the words of Scripture into the language of the people and of to-day (definition, induction, conclusion, filling up what is to be read between the lines, in connection with the necessary explanations, archaeological, typographical, etc., and, in the case of parables or

figures, clear definition of the *tertium comparationis*, and so on). In connection with this, the particular narratives or utterances are to be considered in relation to the whole context—yes, to the *whole system of Scripture teaching* and its *central saving truths*, and are to be illuminated by it in a scriptural way. But it is also desirable, partly to conduct the hearer vividly back into the past of the Scripture text, and partly to bring the latter in such real fashion into the present, that its meaning is felt by the hearer as relating to himself personally, nay, as specially intended for him, and is thus impressed upon his heart and conscience. This lifting of the historical veil from a text, laying bare the general and universal in it, and, again, the reduction of the general to the concrete forms of the present, is the practical, *profitable application*. For this, fidelity to the text, intelligence, perception, the power of edifying and impressing, are always essential requisites.

LITERATURE.—Palmer (S. 71 ff.); Ludwig, *Über die praktische Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift*, Frankfurt, 1859 (S. 65 ff.). For a thorough treatise on allegorical interpretation, see Bindemann, *Bedeutung des Alten Testaments für die Predigt* (S. 166–195).

The holy Scriptures grew up entirely on historical ground, often quite concrete and local (*e.g.* in the apostolic Epistles), and therefore can only be intelligible from the standpoint of their own time, so that they require, for later generations, an illumination from earlier times, and a translation of what is universally applicable from the concrete setting of the past—in other words, an interpretation, with which alone the application can be connected. But the practical exposition is a special kind of exposition in general, which is by no means so related to the scientific kind as the shallow and superficial to the deep and fundamental.

Practical exegesis, if it is of the right kind, does not exclude the scientific, *but always presupposes it with all its historical, critical, and grammatical accuracy*. Only thus is the danger avoided of a gulf between the esoteric-scientific and the exoteric-popular exegesis. Only on the basis of the

former, and with the capacity for inquiry sharpened by it,—but also with the fine feelings and sensibilities which only by pious self-absorption into the text can be led to the deeper and richer veins of truth,—must the latter unfold the deeper truth, the richer bearings of the text, its divine worth, its eternal importance, its soteriological tendency—in short, *its depths of salvation for us* and the life of our time. Hence it must proceed, not merely philologically and historically, like scientific exegesis, but also spiritually [*poenematisch*]. The former, perhaps, helps to clearness, but the latter to a knowledge of the *depths* of the text. For there is certainly often—though not indeed always, as the Alexandrians supposed—a *deeper meaning of Scripture* (Steinmeyer, S. 99), and this is not discovered by mere logic and grammar; merely learned interpretation does not reach it, notwithstanding all its philological accuracy, all its knowledge of the historical setting. For this, the vision is sharpened only by pious and humble meditation on the text, *i.e.* by spiritual work. Augustine: “Hæc est in docendo eloquentia, ut appareat, quod latebat.” Erasmus: “Sæpe scriptura sub vili operimento claudit adoranda mysteria.”

If *practical exegesis* proceeds thus, then indeed it is not the lower, but *the more important*, that which alone carries out rightly and completely the *intentio Spiritus sancti*. *When philological exegesis has finished its work, the work of spiritual-practical exegesis is only really beginning.* Its aim is not merely to ascertain what the particular biblical author meant to say by these or the other words, but, when this has been clearly stated, also to inquire what God, *i.e.* the Spirit of God, intended when he let these words come down to us—just in this form too, and no other; hence, therefore, to ask, What did He wish *us* to say with them? What have we to learn from them? Only the freedom which practical exegesis has in this regard, must always be spiritually exercised, and must remain united with the *analogia scripturæ et fidei* (Landerer, “Hermeneutik,” S. 795 in *Herzog*). He who does not believe in a certain measure of inspiration—*i.e.* at least this, that God wanted to give to the world through the particular writer sound, saving truth and warning, and therefore also so far illuminated this writer by His Spirit that this intention should be fulfilled—will not be able to pursue any deep practical exegesis which will produce spiritual fruit. We often think that we have

adequately understood a text, with the help of the usual philological apparatus; but *we have looked fully into its divine depths only when we have preached on it* with the force of personal testimony, and with true unction! Then, in earnest, practical meditation on it, not only does its eternal intrinsic truth, with its richness of applicability to various conditions and circumstances, strike one for the first time, but also the peculiar wisdom of its special form and method, such as could not be brought about without the guidance and co-operation of the Spirit of God with the writers, thinking out everything beforehand, and taking a view of even future needs.

EXAMPLES.—Luke xix. 10, τὸ ἀπολωλὸς, certainly collective for all lost men; but the homiletic interpretation inquires into the reason why τοὺς ἀπολωλότους is not said; even in the one who is found there are still lost things—ideals, etc.

Matt. xxviii. 19, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη—βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς—διδάσκοντες αὐτούς. Why the change of gender? Nations are to be evangelised and Christianised as whole nations, but also as single individuals, man by man, to be taught, to be baptized—not baptized in masses, as in the Middle Ages. What a lesson lies in this change of gender! In such cases it is not by any means foolish to believe in a working of the Divine Spirit, of divine illumination, with prophetic foresight, in the writers extending even to single words, without requiring therefore to degrade the writers to passive instruments.

The *allegorical* interpretation must never be separated from the simple, practical application and explanation. A case of healing the sick, for example, remains fixed in its historical truth, and yet of itself it invites us to interpret it spiritually and apply it to our hearers, by regarding sin as sickness, blindness, leprosy, etc. “As the biblical parable,” says Palmer quite correctly (S. 98), “uses actual things as pictures of spiritual events and relationships, so, with poetic freedom, the Christian treatment of the sacred history takes this itself, so far as it is external, as a picture also of inward, spiritual, general processes, in which, only without that external aspect, the same divine truth ever manifests itself over and over again.” This is, on biblical ground, quite allowable; for not only is the Old Testament in history and doctrine a type of the New, but the New Testament history

itself stands, in its turn, in a pre-figuring, typical relationship to the life of the Church and of the world.

Even Luther, who was not favourable to the allegorists, because he held "the real, treasure, kernel, force, power, sap, and savour" of the Scripture to be given only in its literal sense, concedes quite freely that when the leading fact is stated, the "secret meaning" may be also introduced "to decorate the text as with beautiful ornaments" (*Predigten*, Erlanger-ausgabe, iii. S. 23). Thus, *e.g.* Luther finds himself compelled to seek an allegorical meaning even in the miracle at Cana, seeing in the water-pots the Old Testament, and in the wine the New. The process of allowable allegory or symbolising is in general this: The historical veil is lifted for a moment, the general thought is taken out and analogies are sought for it even in the present, or the natural is translated into the spiritual (for examples, see Palmer, S. 152 ff.).

To avoid errors, it is of course necessary never to treat the particular merely in its isolation, but to regard it in its connection with the whole system of Scripture teaching. From every point of Scripture the way to Christ can and should be found. The hearer is not merely in a vivid, contemplative way carried back into the past, so that he sees the persons live in bodily form before him, but he recognises in them himself, his faults, his temptations, dangers, needs, etc., and thus also he sees in Christ *his own personal Saviour*, just as he finds Him needful.

*Allegorising* is also a means of avoiding a cleaving to the external. Only we must not go too far. When, for example, the five husbands of the woman of Samaria in John iv. are taken to represent the five senses, and many other numbers in the historical books are taken symbolically, this is intrinsically untrue, unfruitful, and devoid of taste, whilst, on the other hand, it is allowable to make a practical use, even by allegorising, of certain biblical names, as Babel, Jerusalem, Bethany, Bethlehem, Tabor, which are in themselves significant and typical.

*The boundary of the permissible is here determined by the analogy of Scripture, i.e.* if a word, a narrative, a name is used figuratively anywhere in Scripture, or at least if cognate ideas or facts are allegorically interpreted, then practical and homiletical exposition may also do this with a good conscience. When, for example, F. W. Krummacher, taking

the passage, "She, supposing him to be the gardener," represents Christ as the gardener, who now actually comes to her as a Gardener, to raise up again the trees in the garden of His people which had been thrown down by the storm, this is quite justified biblically by John xv., Jer. xxiv., Isa. v., Ps. i. 3, etc.

(β) HOMILETIC EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT IN PARTICULAR.

Homiletic exposition of the text is next divided into *text-interpretation* and *text-application*. By the inclusion of the latter it is distinguished from merely *exegetical* interpretation, whilst by its systematic progress and rhetorical development and finish, it is distinguished from the purely *practical exegesis*.

(8) *Text-Interpretation*.—To the homiletical interpretation of the text, if, moreover, it is to be a clear and effective testimony for Christ, two elements are essential: *Fidelity to the text*, and in some degree *exhaustive treatment of the text*. *Fidelity to the text*, which proceeds in accordance with the rules of true hermeneutics and in the spirit of humble self-subjection to the Word of God, which strives above all to get the meaning *out* of Scripture, and not to read one *into* it,—forbearing to correct the German translation even in the case of real and considerable deviations from the original, and only introducing in course of the sermon those beauties of the original which may not happen to be expressed,—must not venture to use the text in rationalistic fashion, merely as a motto or accidental starting-point. It must make it the actual foundation, supporting the whole sermon, the principal matter to be expounded, so that not merely is the *fundamental idea* of the sermon in harmony with that of the text, but that also all the main divisions and principal thoughts of the sermon are evidently derived from the text itself and its outstanding elements. This should be done the more, according as those principal thoughts are more closely connected with the central subject, so that in the sermon, as far as possible,

the concrete individual features of the text may appear, and that thus the sermon generally may contain, explicitly, only that which is, implicitly, included in the text.

The sermon, therefore, should not *reach out beyond* the text, *i.e.* should not seek to expand it in Montanist or Swedenborgian fashion (which rule, however, does not exclude the possibility of deriving much from it—especially from an Old Testament text—which, perhaps, was not yet, in its full extent, revealed to the writer himself on the then-existing platform of saving knowledge (Jer. xxxiii. 3)), just as, on the other hand, it must *not leave unexplained anything essential* which is contained in the text. The latter holds good generally, and always for the first sermon on a text. Thorough fidelity to the text thus leads, of itself, to *exhaustive treatment of the text* as the second homiletic rule for exposition. When we consider the inexhaustible character of the divine subject of many Scripture passages, and, on the other hand, the limits drawn by the theme itself, this law cannot indeed be *absolutely* carried out, but must be confined to *the essential points*. But none of these must be ignored or superficially treated, and must, especially for the popular understanding of *the more difficult passages*, be somewhat thoroughly explained, so that no point of the text may remain obscure to the hearer. The latter holds good also for those cases where a preacher who has been long in one congregation, especially if he has to preach according to regulation on long lectionary passages, chooses from them for variety this or that particular point, and then expounds it the more minutely, which is quite admissible.

The two requisites, fidelity to the text, and exhaustive treatment of the text, were in olden times regarded as self-evident. Luther, Heinrich Müller, and others, knew no other way than to follow the text in its several parts. For a long time it was not thought that any dispute could arise on the point. "That the carrying out of this rule is a special virtue, was first learned in the time of the *rational-*

*istic-rhetorical preaching*" (Palmer, S. 307). Then it was admired as a homiletic masterpiece to be able to formulate any theme and preach any sermon from any text; if, anyhow, the most remote and superficial connection of the theme with even a subordinate element in the text was effected, then they thought they had sufficiently done their duty to the Church. Then the text was often only a swing, from which to swing oneself away as far as possible, after placing oneself close to it for a moment at the beginning only. For example, a preacher of the *Protestantenverein* said, not long ago, on Luke xv. 1: "There drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners,"—"We take occasion to speak from these words on the social question." He who preaches away from his text will soon also preach above the heads of his hearers. On this mode of preaching, Herder, for example, says (*Brief über das theologische Studium*, Bd. iv. S. 220): "As soon as our orators announce their bitter-sweet theme, is it not as if the soporific heads of a huge poppy were cast over the assembly? The hearer thinks: What has that to do with me? Can this man, with such a general statement hovering in the air, tell me anything about a duty or a virtue, wrapped in the swaddling-clothes of a sermon, which I did not long ago know much better?"

With perfect justice, *fidelity to the text* is again insisted on in our day, *i.e.* agreement of the fundamental idea of the text with that of the sermon, and of the principal elements of the text with the principal divisions of the sermon,—yes, and so far as it is possible, agreement of the whole tone and colouring of the text, even in its concrete features, with the tone and colouring of the sermon. This requires a loving absorption of the preacher in his text, a humble, grateful, all-embracing search for the valuable parts of its contents, a *heartfelt joy* in the richness of its truth! As soon as the hearer perceives in a preacher that he has a real *delight* in his text, and probes with pleasure into its depths in order to bring its pearls to light, then this in itself operates in an edifying way, and awakens love for the Word of God. This is demanded by the character of preaching as a *testimony* for Christ, as the delivery of a divine message now fixed in the Word of God, not as the statement of any human wisdom; the humble, modest subjection of man to the Word of God. But this requires, even in the exposition of details, the getting of the meaning *out* of Scripture, and not the reading



of a meaning *into* it, which latter method rationalism has brought to astounding perfection, especially in doing away with miracle. When, for example, it makes the light which shone around the shepherds on the night of the Saviour's birth a lantern which happened to be passing just at that time, or Christ's walking upon the sea a walk "on the sea-shore" (so even Schenkel), or the agony in Gethsemane a sudden indisposition in the damp night air of the valley, or the resurrection the coming-to-himself again of one apparently dead<sup>1</sup> (unfortunately even Schleiermacher), the appearance of angels at the sepulchre "white linen clothes," which were regarded by the excited women as heavenly beings, when in this fashion, with its arts of interpretation, it produces in its horror of miracles things that are in the highest degree wonderful, this is plainly *imposition*, not *exposition*, as even Goethe has appropriately satirised this method—

"Slavish fidelity is out of date;  
When exposition fails, interpolate."

We need not lose another word on the subject, for any one who is reasonable enough to recognise that "*it requires much more intelligence to believe the miracles of Scripture than understanding to deny them*" (cf. *Moderne Zweifel*, Aufl. ii. S. 399 ff.<sup>2</sup>). But it is just as much *imposition* and not *exposition*, when the rationalism of our time wants to make us believe that, in the case of the resurrection, for example, the reference is not to the reanimating of the body of Jesus, but only to the spiritual continuance of Christ in the hearts of His people, just as if that could be called *ἐξανάστασις*! No: if anywhere, then specially in the pulpit let us beware of spiritual forgery, and allow the Scripture to say what it does say.

But as we are not to falsify, so also it is necessary *not to add anything*, i.e. not to go beyond the text, as if the contents of its revealed truths did not suffice for all the spiritual needs of the people. This is the mistake of the Montanists, Gnostics, Swedenborgians, also partly of the Irvingites, and of many sects which have wanted new revelations. It is only of the Word of Christ that we know that it will remain even when heaven and earth have passed away; additions

<sup>1</sup> "Eines Scheintoten." [Trans.]

<sup>2</sup> Or the English translation of this great work of Dr. Christlieb, *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief* (T. & T. Clark), 1874, p. 324. [Trans.]

to it soon disappear. In opposition to such fanatical tendencies Luther once said, as beautifully as humbly: "The world is always gaping after miraculous signs, and often takes a white dog for a baker's boy, and gladly believes in visions; believers keep to the Word and keep it. I have often prayed to my God to let me see no vision or miracle, nor to speak to me by dreams; for *I have enough to learn in the Word.*" Cf. Rev. xxii. 18, 19, "If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life."

At the same time, we can *carry everything too far*, even fidelity to the text. It is going too far to say that we should only take out of the text what the author himself put into it, *what he actually had in his mind at the time.* This would be to overlook that familiar truth: *Norum testamentum in vetere latet, vetus in novo patet.* Many germs of New Testament saving truths (even that of the Trinity) lie concealed in the Old Testament, the full import of which he who wrote the words could frequently not measure or scarcely guess, into which we now look with the full light of New Testament revelation. *The reasonable knowledge of the sacred writers*, of the divinely-inspired singers, of the recipients of revelation generally, is by no means always covered by the divinely-revealed import of their words. They must often, impelled by the Spirit of God, have uttered things for the pious of future generations, the full meaning of which was not yet clear to themselves. And this, we who stand on a platform of clearer revelation may and must now read out of their words. And that is not, as we sometimes hear it objected, a *magical*, but an ethical-pedagogic mode of operation, ethically carried on in the recipients of revelation, and pedagogic for future generations, in order that the light of this newly-revealed truth may shine through dark times and, even though late, become more clearly perceived in its saving depth.

It is often *the fundamental error of the so-called historical criticism*, i.e. of a spiritless and often godless Bible-anatomy, that it wants to confine the meaning of Old Testament words within the limits of a purely human consciousness, that it treats divine truths as a magnitude quite commensurate with our rational perception, and regards the import of the

writing and the clear consciousness of the writer as always coterminous, and hence, where the writer reaches out far beyond the knowledge which was then possible—*c.g.* in details of Messianic prophecy—simply denies this deeper sense, only in order to import this full knowledge into the head and cognisance of the writer, so as to make it comprehensible how one could of himself thus think, feel, write, *i.e.* to exclude as far as possible the divine factor, inspiration.

With regard to exhaustive treatment of the text, Julius Müller, in the Preface to his Sermons (*Zeugniss von Christo*, 1846, S. xxiv.), strongly insists on fidelity to the text, but attaches no importance to its exhaustive treatment. But why so sharply separate them? Thorough fidelity to the text leads of itself to exhaustive treatment. Müller suggests that not merely is the text itself inexhaustible, but also the individual parts of it. “Do not the eternal, original, fresh thoughts of your text well up out of it the more richly the more you draw?” Certainly. But the concrete statement of the theme prevents us losing ourselves in the infinite. He would only have been right if we understood exhaustive treatment of the text in an absolute sense, of which no one any longer thinks. But that merely a detached clause or a secondary point shall not be extracted from a text, to fill a whole sermon, that, on the contrary, *all the principal edifying thoughts of the text shall receive their due place in the sermon*—this is what we demand, and this only do we call exhaustive treatment of the text.

In *Ohly's Magazine*, “Mancherlei Gaben” (IV. Jahrgang, 1865, Seite 70), a writer thinks that to the requisites of fidelity to the text and exhaustive treatment of it a third should be added, namely, *text-dominance*. If the preacher lets his meditation be rightly dominated by the text, then the text becomes, by reproduction, his own property, so that he is no longer the slave of his own arrangement, but that all is arranged for him. We may indeed call this text-dominance: but why make a special law out of it? This being mastered by the contents is the necessary condition of a many-sided practical application, and belongs therefore to it.

If then, in accordance with these rules, the *whole text* and, in essential matters, *nothing but the text*, is to be

expounded, we next have to concern ourselves with the functions of *exposition of the thought* and *proof of it*.

The *explanation of Christian ideas* has not only to keep in view that the mind of the hearers is not a mere blank page, and that homiletic teaching in Christian congregations has never to lay the foundation of an absolute beginning of knowledge, but also that the import of the fundamental truths of Christianity contains a continual novelty, and that the Christian perception of the congregation is constantly in need of improvement. In the case of most of the fundamental ideas of the Bible (such as God and the world, the kingdom of God, faith and redemption, grace and regeneration, salvation, blessedness, peace, etc., especially also in the case of *Johannine* and *Pauline* ideas, such as light and life, love and sonship, flesh and spirit, sin, law, righteousness, justification, eternal life, etc.), the average mind, as a rule, contents itself with half-knowledge, and is, besides, inclined either to degrade these conceptions to the sphere of the senses, or to dissolve them into generalities. Moreover, the modern currents of unbelief either conceal or weaken the specifically Christian kernel of such ideas—nay, often father upon them a quite different meaning (*e.g.* the idea of the Son of God, Son of Man, the Holy Spirit, Atonement, Resurrection). It is therefore necessary *clearly and definitely to explain in detail to our hearers the saving elements of these conceptions* in the biblical and specifically Christian sense (cf. *supra* 1, (a), (a)), and particularly to state the ideas contained in the latter, or to complete and intensify them, and further, since these fundamental conceptions are all equally ethical in nature, not merely to sharpen the perception, but, at the same time, with all impressiveness to lay hold of the Christian conscience. In this connection the less familiar is to be explained by what is known, partly by the introduction of Scripture passages which are cognate or which state the opposite side, in accordance with the rule, *scriptura scripturam docet*; partly by reference to those aspects of the

mind and conscience, or of experience, in which the subject to be explained has been already illustrated. Whether, in doing so, it proceeds from the particular to the general, or from the latter forward to the particular, homiletic exposition must, in accordance with its free and more living character, always avoid a merely abstract statement of ideas, and must support and illustrate the thought by the life, the idea by its manifestation and observation, in order that it may continue to be intelligible, arousing and edifying for all.

In the homiletic unfolding of the thought the following particulars should therefore be noted:—

1. *We must not assume our hearers as a tabula rasa and begin, ab ovo, with the most general or familiar.* Besides, commonplaces are to be avoided, which, especially in the case of the more educated hearers, make edification infinitely more difficult. The effects of Christian education, a remnant of Christian conscience, are always to be assumed in our congregational preaching. At the same time, it must not be forgotten, on the other hand, that there *the fundamental ideas of Christianity have to be studied over and over again*, and in such a way that if they have been even once explained, we need not be always referring to them. It is generally a doubtful thing to refer back to something previously discussed in preaching, if we have to go back farther than a week, or, at the farthest, a fortnight, on account of the defective memory and irregular church attendance of many. But apart from the necessity of continually refreshing the memory, the fundamental ideas of the Bible are inexhaustible for practical treatment; they admit of infinite variety of illustration. We may therefore from time to time return to them again with a good conscience. Luther confesses in the preface to his *Catechism*—to the deep shame of many who are quickly prepared—how he, although a doctor, found every day something to think of and to study in each of the Ten Commandments, in each petition of the Lord's Prayer!

2. We must consider *how many false or half-true conceptions we have to meet*, in order biblically to correct them or to explain and deepen them. The mental laziness of a very large number of hearers is only too much inclined to dis-

solve into generalities definite biblical ideas, and to content itself with a half-correct, vague conception of the subject. Very few are capable of looking fully at the breadth and depth of particular ideas, down to their roots, or at their connection. Besides, the currents of unbelief of our time are responsible for confusing the most important and fundamental biblical conceptions, whereby terrible perplexity arises in the minds of many. *E.g.*, the *Holy Spirit* is taken to mean the *Spirit* of the [Church] people; hence the idea and the talk of ignorant Christianity. It is therefore necessary at Whitsuntide and at other times to meet many false conceptions, and in many congregations to state quite distinctly the difference between the Holy Spirit descending from *above* and the spirit of the people [Church] formed by itself, by nature and the world. So also the idea of the *Son of God* must be stated in the distinction of a specific singular as applied to Christ, and its generalising plural, "children of God"; the divine consciousness of Christ in distinction from ours. As soon as we weaken and generalise in these cases, such ideas lose their kernel, their most mighty saving elements.

Or let us take the idea of *reconciliation*. When, for example, Schenkel and others say that "reconciliation with God consists in the insight into His forgiving love, the power of which the follower of Jesus proves by his own sacrifice" (*Charakterbild Jesu*, S. 88, 114, 198, 218 ff.), just the most important saving elements—the sacrifice of Christ in the sense of a *substitution* for us—are put aside, and a general phrase is substituted, through which the specific biblical meaning is quite lost.

In the explanation of the *resurrection*, theological forgery appears to-day in its most naked character, when, *e.g.*, Schenkel says (*ut supra*, S. 233) that there is no reference to the external facts of a *bodily* resurrection; that "even Paul denied any value to such a belief" (he who in I Cor. xv. is surely confuting only those who deny the *bodily* resurrection: "How are the dead raised up? and with what *body* do they come?"), that "the Risen One is the glorified and glorious Christ, the Lord who is the Spirit" (S. 232), and therefore the expression "resurrection" is already disappearing in this party, and is confused with the more general and more indefinite "glorification" or "continued life of Christ among us" (Vögelin, *Geschichte*

*Jesu*, S. 111). This is more and more the *tendency* of modern half-belief and unbelief, to exchange, clear, definite biblical conceptions for ideas that are obscure, general, indefinite. Then for less practised eyes the appearance of Christianity is preserved, while the things that are specifically Christian, the saving elements, are lost and blotted out.

In opposition to this, the homiletic explanation of the thought must—

3. *Clearly and definitely* state in detail to the hearers the *saving elements* of the fundamental biblical conceptions, must sharply define the subject in accordance with its nature; thus in the case of the sacrifice of Christ it should state that He gave Himself as a *ransom* for us, that we have here atonement for our guilt, substitution: "He was wounded for our transgressions," etc. On the *resurrection* it must be clearly brought out that the body is here referred to, the carrying through of salvation even to the bodily, the overcoming of the last enemy, the firm, actual basis of Christian hope at the grave. The necessity of the saving elements contained in the ideas, their intimate connection, and therefore the indispensableness of each particular one, must be stated, and in such a way, moreover, that the acceptance of them, which indeed requires an ethical act, an act of faith, shall be impressed upon the moral consciousness of the Christian conscience.

4. *With regard to the technical part*, in this, as in all explanation, we illustrate the unknown by the known, above all from Scripture itself, partly by adducing cognate ideas, partly by illustrations from Old and New Testament history, and then also from human knowledge and experience generally.

EXAMPLES.—2 Cor. vii. 10, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret; but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

Theme:—*Godly sorrow and the sorrow of the world.*

I. Their different nature:—

1. Nature of godly sorrow—

(a) Its root: knowledge of sin.

(b) Its inner impulse: the Holy Spirit, who punishes for sin.

- (c) Its subject: sorrow not merely for itself, but on account of God, whom we have grieved and slighted. Historical illustration of this idea (David, Psalm xxxviii.; Peter; the publican; the prodigal son).
2. Nature of the sorrow of the world. The latter is hearty indeed, but it is only influenced outwardly and inwardly by the spirit of melancholy—
- (a) Its root: the bitter feeling that all is perishing and vain.
- (b) Its impulse and spur: love of the world, self-love, which are grieved, that everything does not go according to their wishes; secret fear that soon all may be lost. In short, the spirit of the world works the sorrow of the world, as the Spirit of God works godly sorrow.
- (c) Its subject: temporal goods and honours which have been, or are about to be lost, just as in godly sorrow it is the forfeited favour of God. Examples: Saul; Ahithophel contrasted with David; Judas contrasted with Peter, etc.

## II. Their different operation:—

1. Repentance.
2. Death, spiritual and bodily, even to suicide.

John xvi. 14, "He shall glorify me."

Theme: *The glorifying of Christ in His people by the Holy Spirit.*

1. What is it? To make bright = to surround with glory. The expression is used of the Father, of men, of the whole earth, so also the glorifying of Christ.

- (a) Revealing of the glory of Christ, His person, His office, the riches of His grace, His rule. Without this action of the Spirit, Jesus would remain unknown to us.
- (b) Illumination of the whole inner man by the light of the knowledge of Christ. By the reception of light man begins to shine, is himself changed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. iii. 18).



- (c) Moulding of the heart after the image of Christ.  
We would ourselves involuntarily, after the model which has deeply taken possession of us. So also the Holy Spirit moulds us.

2. Why is the glorifying of Christ, of His Word and work, the highest aim of this activity of the Spirit?

Because He is the Spirit of truth, and Christ is the Truth itself; hence the forming of saving truth in the heart is also the production of the image of Christ, His glorification in men's hearts.

3. What follows from this?

That which, in spiritual matters, does not serve to glorify Christ, does not proceed from the Spirit of truth. No carrying of religion to perfection beyond Christ, because the Spirit takes everything from the things of Christ. It is also wrong to expect for this age new revelations which are not rooted in the old.

Sometimes, however, it will not be exactly a fundamental biblical idea which has to be explained, and the explanation of which constitutes the inmost structure of the whole sermon, but often some other idea, at first sight sometimes unimportant, and yet on closer consideration very fertile and important. *E.g.*—

1 Pet. iv. 18, "If the righteous *scarcely* be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

What does the little word *scarcely* signify here? It contains a whole, solemn sermon. It preaches—

1. *The trouble* which the preservation of the righteous has cost *God* and still costs Him (Gethsemane, Golgotha; historical examples of Old Testament saints, as Noah, Lot, David, Israel in general; Peter—"Satan hath desired to have thee").

2. *The dangers* which threaten even the righteous man to the end, although they can be overcome. Greatness of the dangers. Besetting sins, and the possibility of overcoming them. Scarcely—therefore with difficulty. Scarcely—therefore nevertheless.

3. *The necessity of constant humility* and continual trust even for the righteous. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Scarcely—therefore a miracle of grace if he is kept and saved. We are not to believe, in

spiritual pride, that heaven is certain—a deeply humbling word.

4. *The folly of the ungodly*, while in this condition still hoping for deliverance from the judgment of God. In the former case it scarcely reached them, in the latter it cannot reach at all. “If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?”

For the avoidance of tedious, abstract discussion of an idea, ready illustration by historical examples is of very great service. Even the man who is unaccustomed to severe thought and cannot grasp separately the particular elements of an idea, receives through the example an approximate conception and correct view.

*The Proof.*—With such an explanation of the ideas the proof is already given; for both functions support each other, and, as a rule, the proof will be introduced by explanation. The *aim* of homiletic proof, however, is not merely the statement that the text consists of conceptions and thoughts which agree with one another and with other passages of Scripture, or that the conclusions, drawn in it from its premisses or the whole context, are justifiable, but especially the proof that the text is confirmed by experience or even justified by a reason enlightened by Christianity. It also aims very specially at proving that the contents of the text are an important, yes, indispensable *element of saving truth*, a direct dogmatic, ethical consequence of fundamental Christian truths or a necessary part of the history of redemption, of the development of the kingdom of God; and, finally, that this or that truth or moral precept contained in the text *corresponds to the deepest need of the human heart*, and is therefore the true and necessary way to salvation, to peace, to fulfilment of the high, divine destiny of man. Such proof, however, will seldom be effected without the disproof of false opinions, and hence *defence* or *refutation* has to accompany the proof.

The *standpoint* of homiletic proof, which the latter, like the explanation, has not to lay down absolutely from the beginning, must not as a rule be laid in the general reason-

able knowledge, since the preacher as such has not to represent knowledge or the purely natural reason, nor in the conscience merely, since the interpretation of its judgment may actually be often erroneous (Rom. xiv. 1; Tit. i. 15; 1 Cor. viii. 7; John xvi. 2; 1 Tim. iv. 2), and hence the Word and Spirit of God are constantly necessary for the purifying (Heb. ix. 14), sharpening and regulating of the judgment of conscience; nor, finally, in the Church and her traditions, because these, for Protestants, are subordinate to the regulative authority of holy Scripture. The standpoint of the evangelical homilete is much rather the holy Scriptures as the divine truth which permanently vindicates itself, as the foundation of the faith and rule for the consciousness of the congregation, and yet not so that the authority and validity of Scripture is absolutely assumed, but that this validity is constantly confirmed afresh by proving the harmony of the testimony of Scripture with that of enlightened reason and the experience of Christian life and conscience. Hence reason and experience, especially the Christian conscience, and also advancing knowledge and history are added to Scripture, at least as *sources* and *means* of proof. Besides, the homilete has to pay regard to the special doubts which exist among his hearers, and generally in the thought of the time, whereby the direction of his method of proof is determined and defined, and, on the other hand, to identify himself and his experience, by his personal faith, with the testimony of Scripture, if he is to be a true *witness*.

Explanation and proof cross one another of themselves. If, for example, a preacher has *explained* the idea "the world," in biblical Johannine sense, he has already proved that it lies in the wicked one. The proof almost always presupposes the explanation. If we want to prove that the poor in spirit are blessed and that theirs is the kingdom of heaven, naturally the idea of spiritual poverty must first be explained.

Three departments have come under consideration, the *aim*, the *standpoint*, and the *sources* or *means* of the proof.

1. *The aim of the proof.*—We have not, above all, to do with formal logical operations in order to prove that the ideas of the text are in harmony with one another (this has perhaps only to be done when they apparently are in contradiction, e.g. Phil. ii. 12, 13, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, *for* it is God that worketh in you to will and to do”; there has to be shown in this “for” the close relation of divine and human activity for the attainment of salvation, and hence the agreement of the first thought with the second. It is said *in* you, but not *instead* of you). Much more frequently we have to prove that the *conclusions* drawn by the text really follow from its premisses or from the context generally; e.g. 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23, “Therefore let no man glory in man, for all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos, etc. . . . And ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” Here the kingly glance which Paul casts over the immeasurable possessions of the Christian, “all things are yours,” has to be proved to be a really justifiable inference from the assumption, “Ye are Christ’s” etc.

Still more frequently the method of proof will have to strive to let the text vindicate and establish itself in presence of *reason* and *experience* as really true and right. Before *reason*, for example, when Christ says, “God is a Spirit” (John iv. 24), we have to show how high this simple biblical expression, and the biblical idea of God generally, stands above all philosophically limited, artificial, abstract, human definitions and conceptions of God, and how this biblical truth vindicates itself as truth, even in presence of the profoundest speculation. Before *experience*, e.g. 1 Tim. iv. 8, “Godliness is profitable unto all things”; here it is desirable to show how this is actually confirmed in all kinds of pursuits and callings.

But this is not the highest and most important aim of preaching. We saw before, that in the case of a text which lies more on the outer fringe of faith, its connection with the centre, Christ, must always be in some degree indicated. On this depends especially the truth and profitableness of every text. Hence the proof can only prove the text as unconditionally true and  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\delta\omicron\gamma\eta\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\omicron\varsigma$  (1 Tim. i. 15), if it is able to describe it in this connection with the kernel of saving truth, or as a necessary, indispensable *part in the complete system of Christian belief*, or, if it is of historical character, in the full development of the kingdom of God.

Then only does the text appear to the hearer sufficiently important and significant, and he recognises as necessary the ethical precepts contained in it.

But the *innermost nerve of the homiletic proof*, which most of all produces spiritual fruit and constitutes, along with the application, the chief edifying element, is the evidence that this or that truth in the text really *corresponds to the inmost need of the human heart*, is really what we want, what our own inmost aspirations,—so long not quite clear,—impulses, and desires have been aiming at, and therefore the true way to life already divinely prepared in ourselves; that the teachings of Christ and his apostles *are often almost the very word which lay in us unspoken, and which now helps us to clearness about ourselves and our needs*. It is this which most deeply touches, awakens, edifies. We must show to the world that Scripture *knows its inmost needs better than it does itself*, that the world at bottom, even though quite unconsciously perhaps, is seeking *the same things* as the Christian, peace and happiness, but on a quite mistaken way, on which it wanders farther and farther from the desired goal; that, therefore, Christ is the only way thereto, and that its heart's needs can only be satisfied through faith. *E.g.* Matt. xi. 28-30, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour," etc.; here it is desirable to show that the world is in these words truly described in its inward character, weary and heavy-laden, in the sweat of the toil and care prescribed by God, and ever laying upon itself a fresh cross in many self-created, unnecessary cares, and therefore laden with work and guilt. Then it has to be shown that what we need is an *easy yoke*; we need a yoke as the ship needs ballast, otherwise we are like the prodigal son; "Let us break their bands asunder," etc. But it must be an *easy* one; it must not press really upon *us*, but upon *the evil in us*, and keep it in bounds, etc. And *Christ's yoke* is really such as we need, it is *easy*; the principal burden, the load of conscience, falls off: it is laid, not forced, upon us with a gentle hand ("take My yoke upon you!"); it is laid on the right place, where it is salutary, upon the old man; it is laid upon us in proper measure and weight, on no one beyond his ability: and no one has to bear it alone, but always with Christ ("I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws" Hos. xi. 4<sup>1</sup>);

<sup>1</sup> Luther's version "I helped them to bear the yoke on their neck." [Trans.]

it is also *His* yoke, because He bears it with us—"I will give you rest." Here we may add proof from experience for the truth, "Ye shall find *rest* unto your souls."

Or 2 Cor. v. 19-21, "Be ye reconciled to God"; here we have to show how reconciliation *is needed*, how our inmost moral consciousness testifies continually to this necessity; how helpful, therefore, is the message, "Be ye reconciled," for this implies that reconciliation is *possible* even now and still—that it has actually *taken place*, and that it is now the earnest desire of God and Christ to make us partakers of it: "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us."

1 John iv. 8, "*God is Love.*" Here it is desirable, not merely to show how in holy love its ethical qualities are included, and reach their inmost necessary culmination, which again is the ground of all other love,—not merely to show how exalted this idea of God is above all other conceptions of the Diety, but to show how our whole spiritual condition—our mind and conscience, our whole life-history with its sins—*hungers after this idea of God*, and can find satisfaction and peace in no other way than through this idea of God; how thankfully therefore we should accept and embrace the revelation of it. Thus only does the proof become really impressive and edifying.

So much for the aim of the proof.

2. *The standpoint* of the proof, from which it proceeds, is *holy Scripture*, as the truth and revelation of God, which stands above reason as well as above the Church. As the truth of God, it is *not contrary to reason*, though it is *indeed above reason* in source, contents, and aim; so also it is *not contrary to the Church* (the harmony of the Church's Creed with holy Scripture should frequently be shown), though *before the Church*, much older than the formulated confession, and *above the Church*, because the Word and Spirit produce and preserve the Church, and endure beyond all experiences of time. As the Word of God, the holy Scriptures are the self-evidencing truth, certain in itself, and now also confirmed by the experience of many thousand living Christians.

But inasmuch as very many in our day dispute this standpoint as absolutely valid, *the authority of Scripture is not always to be merely assumed*, but is often to be freshly established by proving the harmony of Scripture testimony

with true God-apprehending reason, and with the experience of the individual as well as with history in general.

At the same time, we must not forget that there are *many statements* of Scripture which are *in themselves so great and powerful, so grand and majestic*, bearing so directly the stamp of divine truth, that any attempt at a more detailed proof would rather weaken than strengthen them. In such cases let us content ourselves with the *serious, solemn utterance* of them as *dicta probantia*, about which no doubt should exist among Christians. *E.g.* "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts"; "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth."

But if many will not acknowledge the Scriptures as the Word of God, would not *conscience* be the right standpoint for homiletical proof? Here, however, no account is taken of the *huge errors to which the interpretation of the judgment of conscience, left to itself, is exposed*. What is heathenism, with its mistaken ways of approaching God and propitiating Him, but the history of an erring judgment of conscience, even though it is also a proof that conscience in itself has not completely died out? And what is it that in Christendom, for example, has so often raised the funeral pile for those whose belief was different? The erring judgment of conscience, which believed that "it was doing God service" (John xvi. 2). Conscience needs the light and direction of the Divine Word and Spirit, and hence the Scriptures often speak of a defiled, erring conscience, of a seared conscience, etc. The question as to the *objective contents of conscience*, which might serve as a safe court of appeal, is not by any means so easily decided. For these contents are, as a matter of fact, not at all the same in all cases. On the contrary, conscience has individual characteristics in each one, and partly different contents. It decides and judges *according to the insight* of the individual, which is only partially uniform, but partly also very variable and diverse. Hence the diversity in the interpretation of the judgments of conscience in men of different degrees of culture and different religions, along with a certain fundamental agreement. Hence the gaps and chasms in the conscientious judgments of so many men (see *Moderne Zweifel*, 2 Aufl. S. 96 ff.<sup>1</sup>; Köhler, *Das Gewissen* i. 1, 1878; *Entwicklung seines Begriffs*).

<sup>1</sup>Or the English translation, *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief* (T. & T. Clark), pp. 85-89. [Trans.]

On the other hand, if not as the standpoint, yet very often as—

3. *Source and means* of proof, conscience is to be used, next to holy Scriptures, and along with reasonable knowledge, experience, and history. This is evident, if it is once admitted, that *Scripture testimony must be confirmed, especially for unbelievers, by proofs from reason, history, and conscience.* E.g. Prov. xiv. 34, "Sin is a reproach to any people,"<sup>1</sup> may be proved as easily from conscience as from the experience of individuals and the history of whole nations. Or, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father" (1 John ii. 23); this may be justified from experience and to reason, and is also to be confirmed by history, since, as a matter of fact belief in the Father is so completely brought about through the Son that, where faith in the Son is wanting, the former cannot really exist.

Here also it is evident that *the personal standpoint of the preacher* must not on any account be separated from the text, but must be thoroughly identified with the truth therein contained. He must not merely contend for the truth of *Scripture*, but also *for himself*; otherwise he cannot convince. If that which he wants to prove is merely *objective* truth to him, and not at the same time subjective, personal experience, he will leave his hearers cold. *His standpoint must therefore always be objective and subjective, i.e. he must himself appear for the truth of the text, and be a living witness for it; he must lay himself in the balance of the decision.*

(2) *Application of the Text.*—The edifying application of the text presupposes that the *fundamental ideas* have been clearly expounded, the firm statement of which determines the whole direction of the sermon, and the combination of which forms the theme (chap. iv.). But to reach these fundamental thoughts, which frequently cannot be perceived on the surface, a certain gift of finding is needed (*inventio*, not "invention,"), and also a careful attention to the vibration of those chords of mind and conscience which respond with special clearness through the harmony of the truths of the text with

<sup>1</sup> Luther's version: "Sin is the destruction," etc. [Trans.]



the need of one's own heart and of the whole congregation under the guidance of the Spirit from above. If the text has first reproduced itself by its reception into the preacher's own mind, then, from the comparison of its clearly perceived and definitely formulated fundamental thoughts with the requirements of the people and the time, the homiletic application will result. This rests on a *twofold canon*.

1. *In relation to Christ and the accomplishment of salvation.*—What Christ was once as Helper and Healer in grace and power, He is still *for us* also, what He spoke in invitation, promises, etc., what He accomplished as Redeemer, happened for *our salvation* also, and how He appeared in His earthly life is a *model for us* also. Here the difference between the fundamental facts of redemption and the less important, which did not happen in the same way for our benefit, is manifest, whilst the application of biblical narratives to other conditions of life which do not touch the salvation of souls (*e.g.* the use of the dumbness of Zachariah for an exposition of the value of speech, cf. the rationalistic preaching, etc.) is not homiletic. Since, therefore, the two elements are always presented, it happened for our *salvation* and for our *example*, and modern unbelief or half-belief often seeks to hold fast only the element of example without that of mediation and merit, the homiletic application has also to show how little both can be separated, how the second (that of example) can only be realised by presupposition of the first. And it must also so expound the expression "*for us*" that the necessity of the "*in us*" will also be impressed upon the hearers, *i.e.* it has to proceed in such a way that the truth, which is explained and attested, will become truth also *in* the hearers themselves, that it will realise itself *in them* even newly and more fully, *e.g.* that the Christ born for us may also be born *in* us, that there may be *in us* also a resurrection of the new creature, and so on.

Luther says, in his preface to the *Kirchenpostille*: "The principal part and foundation of the gospel is that thou first acceptest Christ and recognised Him as a gift and present given to thee by God and as thine own, before thou takest Him as thy example; that when thou seest Him doing or suffering, thou shouldst not doubt that He Himself, Christ, is thine with such doing and suffering, upon which thou mayest rely no less than if thou hadst done it. If, therefore, thou takest Christ as a gift bestowed on thee for thine own, for the ground and chief good of thy salvation, then follows the other part, that thou take Him also as thine example."

In opposition to this, unbelief and half-belief have long sought to acknowledge only the *example* of Christ as permanently valid, and recently much that is defective has been discovered even in this example, *e.g.* by Strauss, who emphasises the view that Christ does not represent the married, domestic side of life, that He had no enthusiasm for art, that He ignored the life of the state, etc. On the other hand, unbelief notoriously rejects the great facts of Christ's mediatorial life as specially redemptive facts, which as such exercised an influence for all time, even for us, and placed us in a new relationship to God. In this way, both for our faith and also for homiletical application, the true basis is disturbed. The "example for us" evaporates in the air if "our salvation" has not been previously accepted. It is often maintained nowadays that living faith in Christ is independent of the acceptance of the historical facts of His earthly life. But a living faith surely presupposes the *reality of the object* on which it rests, a real person, to whom the believer feels himself to be in a relationship of trust, of unreserved surrender. How can he have this feeling about a person whose origin and actual work has for him no historical certainty? Or how can a person satisfy him who has spent his life only in exalted teachings of wisdom or in conduct acceptable to God? Such a person only sketches in dim outline, as it were, what living faith requires, in order to have an object homogeneous to itself. *Christ as the realised moral law is a second Moses to me*,—only perhaps, with this difference, that Moses shows the law upon the tables in his hand, while Christ shows it as realised in His person and in His life—but *He is no Saviour*.

When Röhr, in one of his christological sermons (S. 3 ff.), states as his theme: "The light which falls upon

our own life through the birth of Christ," and only sees therein "that our life also, *like* His, is a benevolent and gracious arrangement of the heavenly Father, that it, like His, is placed under God's mighty care, with its troubles and experiences, depends on God's wise guidance, and that it, too, is destined for worthy and noble purposes," then the Christmas meditation is thereby deprived of its cause and foundation, of its joy-bringing kernel of salvation.

The same holds good of the new rationalistic teaching about beholding "the face of Jesus," "the example of Christ," which, with Ritschl and Herrmann (*Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott* ["The Christian's walk with God"], 1886), really takes the place of the means of grace.

In the fact of the life of Christ "God reaches us," because we sinners "closed our eyes before the revelation of God as an uncomfortable Being to us. God comes so into relation with us that at the same time He forgives our sins (Herrmann, S. 27). Hence we only need to open our eyes to see that it is delusion and distrust on our part to think that God is angry. He is not angry, but is self-evident love, and as such was revealed in the "personal character of Jesus"; for this "raises us to the assurance that God is our God, and lifts us thereby within the reach of God."

If the idea of God's anger is self-delusion, so also is the consciousness of sin, and he who denies sin as a guilt to be atoned for, overthrows the foundation of all Christian saving truth and ethics. What an emptying and enfeebling of the biblical doctrine of reconciliation! Such passages as "the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin," according to Ritschl, only mean that death does not bring with it the condemnation dreaded by the sinner, that the wages of sin is not for the children of God.

Thus it is all only a progress of knowledge on our part. There is no objective atonement for our guilt, nothing of the historical fact that the Son of God had to take our sin upon Him and atone for it in suffering, in order objectively to bring in reconciliation. But in order to be able to bear the sin of the world and make satisfaction for it, he must have been God in some sort. And to this doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, indispensable as it is even in relation to the meaning of "*for us*," a totally different meaning is given by Herrmann, Schultz, etc., than that which the Scriptures and even the Church have of old associated

with it (Luthardt, *Zeitschrift für kirchliche Mission*, 1886 S. 638 ff.).

The right understanding of the “*for us*” (Christ our righteousness) leads, however, immediately to emphasising the “*in us*” (Christ our new life, our sanctification); this is especially prominent on the great festival days: Christ must be born in us, the old man of sin must also die in us, the new man must rise in us, the heart must daily make a spiritual ascension, the Holy Ghost must descend upon us. This must always remain the culminating point of homiletic application of the festival Gospels; homiletic treatment of the festival texts must always endeavour to reach it in some way.

*E.g. the Christmas message* (Luke ii. 11): “*To you is born this day a Saviour;*” here every word demands an immediate application to ourselves. (1) “*YOU,*” *in its divine all-embracing breadth*, how all have a right, a holy claim to this Child—Jews, Gentiles; children, old people; poor, rich, etc., as is clear from the circumstances of the birth of Jesus, His genealogical tree, etc. (Isaiah: “*Unto us a Child is born*”). But also in its true narrow and narrowing application, for only he has a full right so to rejoice who has the Child, not merely *before* him in its crib, but also in his own heart. (2) “*TO-DAY,*” *with its blessed truth*. At last it came, and it has not yet disappeared; the happy anniversary still returns, therefore, “*To-day, if ye will hear His voice,*” etc. (3) *The all-sufficing helpfulness of the word “SAVIOUR”*; it is proportioned to the guilt of a whole world, therefore to your sin also; He has come as a Saviour for you, because you need one—has He become one *in* you? Are you allowing Him to carry on His work of sanctification in you? Go not away unsaved from the manger! (4) *The condescension of the word “BORN,” uniting God and men*: He did not appear in glorious majesty, but like ourselves, became the brother of sinners, *your* brother, that everyone may be able to have an affection for Him, and freely embrace Him; bound for ever to our human race, etc.

John xvi. 14, Glorification of Jesus in His people by the Spirit. The exposition of the thought has been indicated above; but the *application* is also necessary: Has Christ been made clear to *you*? How many dark places has Christ still for you? The natural man does not perceive His glory. How far is *your* heart moulded after the image of

Christ? How far have *you* allowed yourself to be led by the the Holy Spirit into all truth, to be convinced of sin, of righteousness, of judgment? How far does the image of Christ shine forth from *you*? and so on.

Sometimes the text itself may be taken as the theme, e.g. Gal. ii. 20 ("I live, yet not I, but Christ in me"). *Christ in us*: (1) *How does He come in?* (a) In what way? (By the way of death: I am dead to the law—crucified with Christ; He enters—only over the corpse or the ruins of yourself, of the old man). (b) In what form and with what forces? As the life. With what right? "Who loved me and gave Himself for me." (2) *What does He do in us?* He wants to live ("Christ liveth in me"), to grow, to purify us, to inspire us to everything good. (3) *What are we to do with Him?* (a) Let Him live, and expand until He has taken complete possession: "The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God;" He must increase, you must decrease, etc.). (b) Avail yourselves of Him for everything, do nothing without Him, like Paul. (c) Comfort yourself, and rejoice in Him in life and in death; if He is your life, He will also be your death, and thus death will be your gain, etc.

2. *In relation to men, the recipients of salvation: us mankind then* was in the time of Christ and under the old covenant, namely, *in need of salvation*, but at the same time, in the great majority of cases, resisting the light, hardening itself in unbelief, and in the small minority receptive, eager for salvation, feeble or strong in faith, *so is it still* (compare especially in this connection the story of the Passion and the various characters which appear in it with our own time), which of course does not exclude—e.g. in comparing the early Christian churches with those of to-day—allusion to the often very considerable *difference* between then and now. Here the preacher has always to start from this, that, on the one hand, the human heart in its natural state is and has been *essentially the same* for thousands of years, even though the forms and names of his habits and sins are changing, and that, on the other hand also, the fruits of saving grace, on account of the

one Spirit who produces them, must appear in all ages *essentially the same*.

In the application of this double canon, the remarkable combination of the particular and the universal, the rigid adhesion to the true boundary line between what is fixed and what is left free, and therefore *the infinite many-sidedness and applicability of Scripture* to all times with their changing conditions and needs, will suggest itself to the believing and studious homilist as an undeniable proof of their *theopneustia*, whilst the hearers, the more plainly they recognise in the didactic or historical parts of Scripture *themselves their own needs* or faults, will feel themselves more effectively edified by the sermon.

EXAMPLE.—Luke xii. 16–21, *The rich man who is not rich towards God*.

1. How beautifully he calculates.

- (a) He has prosperity, without taking note of God's goodness.
- (b) He is always thinking with himself about his earthly affairs.
- (c) He makes plans for increasing his business.
- (d) He intends finally to retire into a comfortable leisure.

2. What a stroke God draws through the beautiful calculation.

- (a) God shows him his folly.
- (b) He shows him the transitoriness of earthly things.
- (c) He warns him of his neglect (thy soul).
- (d) He warns him of the impending reckoning.
- (e) He warns him of the vanity of his toil and care.

3. How necessary it is therefore, amid all the work of earth, to be rich towards God.

For complete homiletic exposition of the text there result, therefore, from the above as the most important requisites: *edifyingness, intelligibility, capacity for being perceived and for being retained, and impressive application* (cf. (b), (α)).

This second canon is of course *inseparable from the first*: as salvation is still valid and still the same, so also the recipients of salvation are essentially the same; in our day mankind without Christ is still feeble and scattered, sheep without a shepherd, each following his own way, full of misery and sin, hungry as those multitudes were in the wilderness, poor, blind, lame, spiritually dead—therefore *in need of salvation*; and besides, for the most part loving the darkness rather than the light, people whom neither the Baptist with his severity nor Christ with his human sympathy can satisfy, like those children in the market-place (Matt. xi. 16 ff.); at the best, hearers but seldom doers, persecuting even those that bear witness for the truth, serving their stomach, mammon, etc., and therefore *hardening themselves in unbelief*. How true to-day is still the description of the hearers who do not become doers. Ez. xxxiii. 30–33, “They speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh from the Lord. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee *as my people*, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness,” etc. On the other hand, we find only *few genuine Israelites* who are of the truth, and therefore hear the voice of truth, receptive, penitent; and even these few not all and not always strong in faith, but often weak like Peter, doubting like Thomas, often falling seriously like David, etc.; but then also here and there showing the fruits of the Spirit in faith, love, zeal, and self-sacrifice.

In appropriate material of this kind, *the story of the Passion*, for example, is particularly rich (see Palmer, S. 150).

*The trial in the high priest's palace.* Theme: *How the world seeks to vindicate itself*:—(1) Although the truth is manifest and present, the world acts as if it were not there (the high priest *asks* about the teaching of Jesus, where the Lord had taught quite publicly); (2) although the truth is clear and plain, yet it is made obscure (the false witnesses); (3) although the truth is only in one, even He is made a liar (the high priest's adjuration); (4) although the truth has demonstrated itself with power, yet it is insolently challenged (“Prophecy unto us, thou Christ”—the smiting on His face, etc.).

Or *the trial before Pilate and Herod*. Three leading

forms of sin—(1) shameful servitude—Pilate (he wants to do right and cannot, because of the fear of man); (2) contemptible levity—Herod and his gang only want a miracle for their amusement: (3) lying wickedness—the leaders of the people.

It is very specially in the application that we see the *infinite variety and appropriateness* of Scripture, which by these qualities becomes to the believing student even greater, diviner, and more beloved. Here he finds a proof of inspiration to which dogmatic theology seldom directs attention—the remarkable combination of the universal and the particular, of *fixity and liberty*, the correct line being at the same time sharply drawn, *e.g.*, in the directions about those in authority (Rom. xiii. 1-7). Who, without divine enlightenment, could have so sharply kept the true boundary line for all times and circumstances? If one individual presiding Spirit had written all the books of Scripture, that delicate preservation of the correct line would have been wonderful enough. For there has so far been no philosopher, founder of a religion or lawgiver, who, as the son of his time and looking at things from its conditions, would not have followed out his own fundamental conceptions and views of detail, which would not have adapted themselves as suitable to later times (cf. *The Koran*; Plato's *Republic*). But that a number of men, independent of one another, who were indeed filled with the one Spirit, but who had framed no system of any kind for the extension and application of their teachings to the individual spheres of life, and could not even think of constructing such a system—that *these men have not transgressed that line even in a single point, this is a fact which without theopneustia is absolutely incomprehensible!* How easy it would have been, for example, expressly to condemn war! Had that happened, then either the conscience of Christian nations would have received a constantly open wound, or Christendom must have remained an obscure sect. On the other hand, however, there is no express recognition of the absolute necessity of war, and quite rightly so. It is said to us: "As much as *lieth in you*, live peaceably with all men." Notice the great divine wisdom in leaving the Christian consciousness, here and in many other passages, especially even in questions of Church government, to its own development (Gelzer,



*Protestantisches Monatsblatt*, Feb. 1863). From this divine peculiarity of Scripture comes the endless many-sidedness of its application.

All this let us now present to our hearers in a form *that can be easily retained* (the other requisites have been already discussed above)—complete, comprehensible—so that everyone can take it with him and recall it without trouble. A very great deal depends on this: hence Christ so often speaks in short, sententious form. When the truth is so tightly packed, everyone can most easily take it away [lit., “put in his pocket”]; *salus populi suprema lex esto!* *summa utilitas omnis regula* (but compare on this chap. iv., the formal part).

Georg Konr. Rieger (*Herzenspostille* and *Matthäuspredigten*) is especially a master in edifying homiletical exposition and the application even of small details.

## 2. HOMILETICAL MATERIAL AS DETERMINED BY CHURCH CREED AND CHURCH CUSTOM.

Here the subject is partly the relation of the homiletic exposition of Scripture by the individual to that of the Church, the fundamental lines of which are indicated by the Church's *Creed*; and partly also the relation of the choice of texts for homiletic purposes to the Church's *custom*, and in this connection the relation of the free choice of texts to that appointed by the Church, or the *lectionary-question*, and partly the relation of the choice and treatment of the text to the *Church year*, or the consideration of special times and days and occasions.

### (a) *The Homiletic Exposition of Scripture in Relation to the Church's Creed.*

Since the Christian Church and theology has not, for a long time, been united on the exposition and application of holy Scriptures even in essential points, the particular Church from which the preacher receives his position and his bread, and for whose maintenance and extension he has to labour,—even though subordinately to his duty to Christ and the kingdom of God in general,—has a right to

demand that the individual *homiletic exposition of Scripture shall be determined by the conception of Scripture formulated in the Church's Creed* (see above, chap. i. 2, (b), ( $\beta$ ), "according to the confessions of the Churches"). But since the Creeds of the Churches, on account of their human origin, are not to be placed on an equality of authority with holy Scripture as the divine standard for the material of preaching, and according to the evangelical principle of doctrine, rightly understood, are not so much literal doctrinal laws as *doctrinal limits*, and, in the great majority of them at anyrate, defensive documents against errors which actually appeared in the past and are ever threatening afresh—the evangelical preacher has the right and the duty always *to test* over again the contents of *the confessions* according to the standard of the Word of God. Because, moreover, the evangelical Church [in English sense "the Protestant Church"—Trans.], from the time of the Confessions of the Reformation (cf. for example, part iii. of the *Articles of Smalcald*), and especially from the older dogmatists down (cf. Hunnius), has with perfect right laid down *the distinction*, which rests on biblical grounds (1 Cor. iii. 11 et seq.), *between fundamental and non-fundamental articles of faith*—

1. *In opposition to a crude confessionalism*, it must be maintained that the stricter formulating of homiletic exposition of Scripture in accordance with the Creeds of the Churches can only hold good *with reference to all fundamental articles of faith*. The Church's definition of these must have approved itself to the preacher as essentially correct and scriptural, ere he accepts from this Church a commission to teach. On these fundamental articles, in which, indeed, the evangelical Confessions are moreover in essential agreement, such as on the authority of holy Scripture, on God and the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, sin and redemption through Christ, reconciliation and justification *solâ fide*, the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion and regeneration, the resurrection,

judgment, and eternal life (cf. above, I, (a), (a), the foundation facts of salvation), the preacher must not teach anything which is contrary to the Creed of his Church, and therefore contrary to the substance of the universal evangelical faith, because contrary to holy Scripture. For the rest, however, since no part of dogmatics or morals is to be excluded from the pulpit, he must expound the Scripture according to the best of his knowledge and conscience *in an evangelical sense and spirit*, even though some particulars might not always be in full agreement with the letter of the Creeds. Generally speaking, the rule holds good for dogmatic expositions, that the congregation is more deeply edified, and the preacher himself feels surer ground under his feet when he takes his stand *rather upon the biblical consensus than upon the confessional dissensus*.

But on those fundamental truths the Church may with justice also demand—because there is no special pulpit-dogmatic, but there is a catechism-dogmatic—that the congregation, which draws its faith and its Creed principally from the Catechism, shall have dogmatic expositions presented to it by the preacher only in agreement with those *familiar ideas of the Catechism* and with *the language of Scripture generally*, but not in modern scientific terminology,—which of course does not exclude the deeper confirmation and elucidation of these ideas by the growing light of knowledge (cf. chap. iv., “Popularity”).

Cf. also Ficker, *Grundlinien der evangelischen Homiletik*, chap. ix., “On the correspondence of Preaching with the Confession.”

On this question we stand in opposition to two extremes—crude confessionalism and false liberalism. The first, at least in practice, places the Confession almost on an equality in authority with holy Scripture, by seeking to bind the preacher to the letter of the Confession on *all* the Articles of Faith; the second pays no heed to the authority of the Confessions, because it has already, to a large extent, given up that of Scripture. *But both are agreed in this, though from opposite sides, that they do not regard the dis-*

*inction between fundamental and non-fundamental articles—* the former, because, at least in practice, it regards *everything* as fundamental; the latter, because nothing is fundamental to it, but everything disputable. What position do we occupy in relation to them?

(*α*) *We recognise that the Church may and must, by its Confession, regulate the homiletic exposition of Scripture in general.* The Church forces no one into her service, but puts her views before the preacher at the very beginning to be tested by him. It is his duty to prove them, and only to enter into her service if he has accepted them as correct and scriptural. He has certainly his first duty to Christ and the kingdom of God, but because he must also see a part of this kingdom in the Church whose services he has undertaken, he is serving the one *in* the other, and must not forget that his office makes the maintenance and advancement of the Church, on the basis of the Confession accepted by him, to be his sacred duty, and that therefore it would be a breach of faith to help to disturb this basis.

(*β*) *But we cannot recognise the Confessions as of equal authority with holy Scripture,* because they are derived from it. Something which in all its parts is dependent upon a higher norm, cannot be equally a norm in its turn. This certainly was by no means the idea of those who framed the Confessions. The latter, therefore, do not form a new rule of doctrine alongside of the holy Scriptures, but as their historical origin shows, *rather a doctrinal limitation, a firm fence* against old and new errors. Since the Gnostics were obscuring the Christian idea of God, the apostolic *regula fidei* was gradually developed, in opposition to them, into the "Apostles' Creed"; since the Unitarians, Ebionites, Samosateans, Sabellians, and especially Arius, were obscuring the biblical doctrine of the Son's relation to the Father, the Church sought to build a boundary wall against these false tendencies by the expansion of the Apostles' into the *Nicene Creed*, shortly afterwards against Apollinarism and Macedonianism by the expansion of the Nicene into that of Constantinople, against the later Arians and Subordinatians, Monophysites, Donatists, etc., by adding the *Athanasian Creed*. So also the Reformers were compelled, by the obscuring, in the Middle Ages, of the biblical doctrine of repentance, of justification, of the sacraments, of the Church and

its government, etc., to construct from Scripture a wall of defence against these later errors, and these are our *modern symbols*, which have been added to the old ones, which, however, *because they profess to be drawn purely from Scripture*, and because they appear in a variety of considerable deviation from one another, make it our duty constantly *to test them by Scripture*—a test, the justification of which can be the less objected to, since one may find himself according to his theological knowledge at the time in perfect accord with them, and yet, through fresh studies of Scripture, may later on have doubts on particular points, or may even in the symbols of his Church detect differences in certain details; as, for example, it would be very difficult even for a strict Lutheran to deny that in the doctrine of predestination, as stated in the *Formula of Concord*, there is something hard to reconcile with its doctrine of conversion.

(7) The distinction between *articuli fundamentales* and *non-fundamentales* is insisted on by the Reformers themselves. *E.g.* in the *Articles of Smalcald*, the first part treats *de summis articulis*; in the second, an *articulus primus et principalis* on the work of redemption is stated; of the third, however, it is stated in the superscription: “De sequentibus articulis agere poterimus cum doctis et prudentibus viris, vel etiam inter nos ipsos.” Then Humnius introduced into scientific theology the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental articles, and Quenstedt developed it still further. We do not like to see that in our day rigid Lutherans especially obliterate this distinction, and make everything contained in the confessional documents into unalterable rules of doctrine, seeking also to bind the homilist entirely to them, as Stahl, for example, does in his work on *Die lutherische Kirche und die Union* (when, *e.g.*, he proposes the misleading question: “Is it to be fundamental to deny the bread and wine in the communion, and non-fundamental to deny the body and blood of Christ?” As if the Lutheran doctrine of the communion were as far removed from the Reformed doctrine as from the Roman Catholic!). None of the dogmatic specialities of the theology of the schools will ever win the world—nothing but the simple scriptural unity of the evangelical faith. In spite of artificial renewals of old controversies, we may say with a good conscience, even in our own time, that the consciousness of the unity of the evangelical Church on the ground of

a common faith, and, therefore, the distinction of this common ground as fundamental from the other doctrines as non-fundamental has penetrated into the circles of believers generally. Those fundamental truths, moreover, have been already taken out of the various Confessions as the peculiar substance of the evangelical faith, and have been newly formulated and fixed in elementary lines as a common basis of the belief of Protestantism against that of Rome, and also against unbelief. Thus the Prussian General Synod of 1846, in accordance with a proposal of Nitzsch, drew up a confession of the fundamental facts and fundamental truths of the gospel, a biblically extended Apostles' Creed, to be assented to by candidates for ordination. Similar are those articles of the Evangelical Alliance, on the basis of which thousands of Bible-believing Protestants in all lands have united, not merely in a general fellowship, but even in the fellowship of the Lord's Supper. We say, therefore, simply—

(δ) *The homilist who enjoys the bread of a church must regard himself as bound to the fundamental articles of the evangelical faith, as they appear in essential unity in all Protestant symbols, but to the non-fundamental particulars only in so far as his Christian conscience, studying exegetically and always examining the Scriptures more closely, permits him. Let him therefore expound the Scriptures, to the best of his knowledge and conscience, in an evangelical spirit, but without feeling himself bound to the very letter of the symbols, only so that the *analogia fidei* is not violated. So Bengel says, on duty to the symbolic books, that we must not force the servants of the Church to all *particularibus in iis contentis, exegesi*, etc. "Nothing further was required than that we accept and subscribe to the chief theses, not to the details, or to the proof, or to the exegesis." Dorner, *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie*, S. 650; and Nitzsch, *Protestantische Theologie*, i. 307 ff.: "Heterodoxies are indeed to be distinguished from fundamental errors or heresies." And so it has always been held in practice. If we were to turn our attention to those who so greatly exaggerate the value of the Confessions, we should no doubt discover many a material discrepancy in details between their sermons and their Church standards.*

(ε) Further, in reference to the *formal homiletic treatment of those fundamental truths*, let us remember that we should

adapt ourselves as far as possible to the *ideas that are familiar to the people*, or at anyrate always make them our starting-point. These ideas, however, are expressions either of the Catechism or the Bible. Modern scientific terminology may easily confuse.

In the discussion of *non-fundamental statements of doctrine*, however, especially of such as are not more fully expanded in the Catechism, let us keep as far as possible to the *expressions of holy Scripture*; and in the case of well-known points of controversy between the Lutheran and Reformed doctrine, as, for example, on the Lord's Supper, it may be laid down as the verdict of universal experience, that it is most profitable for the hearers, and they follow the preacher with the most pleasure, when he keeps himself to the simple statements of his text, without bringing forward the detailed statements of the symbols in all their incisiveness.

2. *Our standpoint in opposition to false liberalism.*—

There are those who, in an opposite interest, in consequence of their thoroughly rationalising conception, deny the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental truths, in order to drag down the eternally firm, inalienable divine substance of Christian faith into the current of human opinions, which are ever changing and therefore to be left to the individual taste; who let loose their doctrinal freedom on subordinate points into boundless arbitrariness of teaching even on cardinal points. In opposition to these the preacher has to maintain that the Christian Church from the very beginning built itself up in life and doctrine on the firm ground of the confession of the historical revelation of God for salvation, of the Crucified and Risen Saviour, as in course of time it was embodied in the "Apostles' Creed," remained the basis also of the evangelical Confession, and forms the divine foundation of the whole treasure of Christian truth, and, therefore, also the divine motive-power of the life and growth of the evangelical Church; and, generally, that a Church, in accordance with its idea and nature as a fellowship of belief and there-

fore also of public teaching, cannot exist without a common Confession. Finally, the preacher must not forget, that as one called to the service of this Church he has, on the other hand, the sacred duty of using as a weapon against all such destructive errors not merely the holy Scriptures, but also the Confessions, since the Confessions are intended to form a firm wall of defence against these very dangers. But if he cannot any longer agree with those cardinal points, from which the Church cannot release without surrendering itself (1 Cor. iii. 11 ; 2 Cor. xi. 4 ; Gal. i. 8 ; 1 Tim. vi. 3-5 : 2 John 10, 11), let him rather, in order to remain a man of honour, resign the head of the Church whose statutes he can no longer keep.

*The Church is a living, growing organism ; therefore it needs both : a firm ground, root and stem—against those who would tear up the ground and hew away the roots ; but also progressive movement in width and height, a pliancy and flexibility of the branches, which do not belong to the roots—against those who, by legal enforcing of the symbols even in the uttermost branches of doctrine, reduce the living stream to stagnation, and thereby stunt and ossify the life ; and who, besides, are needlessly alarmed if a storm strips off the more ephemeral leaves and even carries away a few slender branches, as if the inmost life of the tree were thereby endangered. In a word, for fresh, healthy life the Church needs both : an element of stability and an element of mobility.*

*In necessariis unitas, in dubiis (non necessariis) libertas, in omnibus (utrisque) caritas !* So say we with Rupert von Melden, who held this in opposition to the controversial theology of the seventeenth century (it is incorrectly attributed to Augustine) (Hagenbach, v. S. 155). If we claim for the preacher *the libertas in dubiis*, so also we insist on his remaining, *in necessariis*, in the Christian evangelical *unitas !* The Church is at the very least a *society with definite rules*. Church fellowship rests on a community of *faith* ; on the ground of one and the same faith the members meet and are organised ; the *community of faith*, which finds its expression in the Creed, forms *the condition of entrance to it, not to speak of the acceptance of office in it*. He who cannot



any longer keep its rules in essential points should fairly and honourably resign. But he who, like the liberal unbelievers, completely opposes these rules, undermines them, denies to them their right, their validity, seeks by every means to abrogate them—ought not, with any decency, *to seek to do this in the very name of this society*; but this is done by preachers who obtain from the Church a commission to teach in order to undermine from the very pulpit the Church's doctrines. Whilst the doctrinal freedom of the evangelical Church is plainly limited by the fundamental facts of salvation, these men, proceeding from a *false, vague idea of toleration*, do not recognise even these limits, and leave every dogma, no matter how central, to the inclination of individual thought. *Thus freedom becomes licence*. In this way the firm kernel of Christian truth becomes dissolved, drawn into the current of changeable subjective conceptions, and finally no longer acknowledged as fundamental. In this way the Church, as such, loses all its real foundation and ground, and loses itself in a universal humanitarianism, particularly in relation to the State. So it is now in Switzerland, when, for example, a State law was passed in Geneva on the 26th April 1874, which decides that "every pastor of the Protestant National Church of Geneva is free to teach and preach on his own responsibility, and that this freedom must not be restricted either by Confessions of Faith or by liturgical formularies." The Church thus ceases to be a Church if everyone may preach what he likes, and with such chaos men play into the hands of no one more than the sects and the Roman Church! This, too, is the final conclusion of the left side of the Tübingen school, at least so far as its *principles* are concerned, though it does not indeed often venture to give practical effect to its conclusions. *Nothing in doctrine is to be permanent any longer*. So says Zeller, for example, one of the most advanced on the left of Baur's disciples, in his *Vorträgen und Abhandlungen geschichtlichen Inhalts*, that the nature of Christianity is shown in early Christianity "everywhere or not at all." that it can only be understood from the whole of its historical manifestation, but least of all from its dogmas, which are continually changing and must change, because they are only something subjective. Is there a more comfortless conception? But this is the meaning of the tendency of our time. "Only no positive dogmas!" is its

watchword. Instead of the foundation laid by the Apostles and Reformers, instead of the definite facts of salvation, general moral rules, perhaps, are to determine doctrinal freedom. These, it is said, remain fixed; but dogma is always changing.

Let us not be confused by the talk about intolerance! The question is simply one of order and clearness. The right of existence within the *State* cannot, and must not, ever be refused to these views. But it is a quite different question whether they can be equally allowed in a *Church* with definite fundamental doctrines. This must be denied by everyone who acknowledges these fundamental doctrines to be divinely revealed and, therefore, immutable and inalienable.

Richter says, in his *Lehrbuch des katholischen und evangelischen Kirchenrechts*, 6 Aufl. S. 680: "The view that each individual preacher may hold by his own particular standpoint in opposition to the Creeds, is utterly irreconcilable with the idea of a Church as a fellowship of faith, and therefore also of public teaching. Churches do not make offices in order that in a hundred churches a hundred different doctrines may be preached by learned and unlearned minds, but in order that the *one* spirit of evangelical faith may be proclaimed and impress itself on men's hearts. Hence the particular duty to the symbols seems quite justified as a special warning to the conscience."

Cf. Nitzsch, i. 307 ff.: "Freedom of teaching must always be regulated and defined, so that every perversion of the teacher's office for the public undermining of the Christian doctrine will be regarded as usurpation and anarchy, and treated accordingly." And Rothe (*Theologische Ethik*, v. S. 433): "A permanent Church doctrine is in fact an indispensable requisite for every Church. Without some kind of symbol an actual Church is not conceivable, and the symbol is no symbol at all if it has not authority for regulating the teaching in the Church." Even Krauss (S. 180 ff.) declaims against "neoteric titillation," and emphasises the conscientious subordination of all subjective personal views of the preacher to the objective common faith of the Church or—the laying down his office.

In times when dogmatic critical questions especially occupy or even perplex the mind, or when the preacher

discovers in his congregation (especially in a mixed one<sup>1</sup>) much indefiniteness or important points of doctrine,—and this, even among educated people, is usually greater than we think,—it is well that *sermons of a doctrinal kind* should be given from time to time. Only let us not give our theme the general title of a section of dogmatics, such as “Of Justification,” “Of the Holy Communion,” etc., but a more concrete form according to the elements contained in the text, or with an ethical direction.

Such *Doctrinal Sermons* are, for example, in the older times, the Catechism-sermons of Joh. Arndt, republished, 1770; Tholuck, *Predigten über die Hauptstücke des christlichen Glaubens und Lebens*, 5 Bände, Gotha, 1863; Tholuck's *Sermons on the Apostles' Creed*, ii. S. 128–187; Ahlfeld, *Predigten über das II. Hauptstück des Katechismus*, 2 Aufl. 1857; Petersen, *Predigten über den christlichen Glauben nach dem apostolischen Glaubensbekenntniss*, 1859; Harless, *Ueber die Abendmahllehre Sonntagsweihe* [“The Lord's Supper, and Sunday Observance”—Trans.], i. S. 175 ff.; Hagenbach, *Ueber das stellvertretende Leiden Jesu* [“On the Substitutionary Sufferings of Christ”], ii. S. 43; *Ueber den Glaubensartikel von der Himmelfahrt Jesu* [“On the Ascension”], vi. S. 78 ff.; Cl. Harms, *Sermons on the Creation, Redemption, Sanctification, the Bible, the Augsburg Confession*, etc.: Löhe, *Ueber die Versöhnung* (seven sermons), S. 40 ff.; Strauss, *Ueber die Rechtfertigungslehre* [“The Doctrine of Justification”]; Fournier, *Sermons on the Christian Doctrine of Faith*, 1847; Jul. Müller, *Zeugnisse von Christo*, v. vi. x.; W. Hoffmann, *12 Predigten über die letzten Dinge* [“The last Things”], 1857; Caspari, *Predigten über das I. Hauptstück des lutherischen Katechismus*, 1857; Thomasius, *Predigten zumeist apologetischen Inhalts*, 1865.

Among sermons treating of special sections of *Christian ethics*, and at the same time based on doctrine, I name, of the older ones: Spener, *Predigten über die christlichen Lebenspflichten* [“Christian Duties of Life”], a year's course; Brastberger, *Die Ordnung des Heils*, S. 280; Öttinger, *Herrenberger Predigten*, 3 Epiph., “Courtesy, a daughter of Faith; Discourtesy, a daughter of Unbelief”; Georg C. Rieger (“On the Christian's Carefulness in Little Things”), *Gesammelte Predigten*, 1843. Among the more recent: Cl. Harms, *Winter- und Sommerpostille*, a course of sermons on morality—“Praise

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* composed of people of different denominations. [Trans.]

of Simplicity," "On the Oath," "On Humility," and then especially from the 1st to the 6th Sunday of Trinity, on "Usury," "Grace before Meat," etc.: Ahlfeld, *Predigten über den Dekalog*, 1858; on the same, Caspari, 1852; Frommel, 1859; some sermons by Nitzsch (I. *Auswahl*, S. 305; II. *Auswahl*, S. 7); Tholuck, *Predigten über Hauptstücke christlichen Glaubens und Lebens*, iv. S. 163 ff.; Liebner, *Predigten*, ii. 1861, etc.; L. Hofacker, *Predigten* ("On the Right Use of the Tongue").

(b) *Choice and Treatment of Homiletic Material as regulated by Church Custom.*

RANKE, *Das kirchliche Perikopensystem* ["The Church Lectionary system"], Berlin, 1847; *Ueber den Fortbestand des herkömmlichen Perikopenkreises*, Gotha, 1859; Artikel "Perikopen," in Herzog's *Realencyklopädie*.

THAMER, *De origine pericoparum*, 1734.

LISCO, *Das christliche Kirchenjahr*, 4 Aufl. 1846.

WIRTH, *Ueber die kirchlichen Perikopen*, Nürnberg, 1842.

MATTHÄUS, *Die evangelischen Perikopen*, Ausbach, 1844–1846.

FR. STRAUSS, *Das evangelische Kirchenjahr in seinem Zusammenhang dargestellt*, Berlin, 1850.

NEBE, *Die evangelischen Perikopen des Kirchenjahrs*, 3 Bände, Wiesbaden, 1869, 1870: *Und Einleitung zu den epistolischen Perikopen*, 1874 ff.

(a) THE FREE CHOICE OF TEXTS CONTRASTED WITH THAT REGULATED BY THE CHURCH, OR THE LECTIONARY QUESTION.

The question whether the choice of texts should be absolutely free or should be fixed by the Church is still variously answered in the evangelical Church, with reference to Sunday and festival services, while with reference to week-day services freedom generally reigns. In this matter the *Lutheran Churches*, which mostly bind their pastors to the lectionaries, both for the liturgical *reading* in church and for the *text of the sermon*, and the *Reformed Free Churches* (Independents, Baptists, Methodists, even the

Presbyterians, etc.), which allow full freedom in regard to both, are furthest apart from one another. An intermediate position is occupied by the State Churches, which prescribe for the Church *lessons* the use of the old or even extended lectionaries (especially the Anglican Church, etc., see below), but leave the choice free for *the sermon*, or, for the latter, allow the use of one or two yearly courses of the lectionary to alternate with a yearly course of free texts (*e.g.* Baden). But since, in the second year, the Old Testament was hardly considered at all, the *Rhenish Provincial Synod*, for forty years under the guidance of Nitzsch, added for the Church lessons a selection from the Old Testament, which in the third year takes the place of the Epistles of the first year, whilst the *Westphalian Synod* arranged for this to be done in the first year. What is essentially the right plan?

The use of particular portions of Scripture for reading in church (*περικοπαί*, sections) was incorporated in the Christian Church through the forms of the synagogue worship (Luke iv. 16, 17; Acts xiii. 15, xv. 21), but from the beginning was fixed differently in different branches both of the Eastern and of the Western Church (yet, so far as the New Testament lessons were concerned, always with equal consideration of the gospel and "Apostolos"—*i.e.* the Acts of the Apostles together with the Epistles—as the two integral parts of the New Testament, the divine work of salvation, and the human acceptance of salvation), and passed on even into the evangelical State Churches in forms not quite identical. These lessons originate, so far as their reading in the *Western Church* is concerned, according to the more recent investigations (especially those of Ranke), with Jerome, who drew up definite sections of Scripture for reading on festivals (cf. the work attributed to him, but partly, perhaps, later—*Comes seu Lectionarius*, a companion for the regular public or private reading of holy Scripture), which, expounded in the Canon of the Mass and the Homilies of Gregory the Great, were intro-

duced by law as lessons also for the holy days and particular "Horae" in the Roman Church. But to preach on them also was optional with the pastor. Subsequently we find the "pericopae" used as texts for sermons also by the Venerable Bede. They were still more recommended and first introduced as such by the *Homiliarium*, which Charlemagne caused to be prepared by Paulus Diaconus (Warnefried) for the use of the clergy in liturgical worship. But through the circumstance that in different dioceses different lessons were gradually added to the original festival *pericopae*, especially by the increase of holy days and their appropriate passages, by the addition of the feast of Corpus Christi to the festival cycle (since 1264) and the consequent change of the system of lessons, and finally through the revisions which the Canon of the Mass itself suffered from time to time, it happened that in the time of Luther, who added to the old order perhaps the lessons for the 6th Sunday after Epiphany, and certainly those for the 25th, 26th, and 27th Sundays after Trinity, the lessons in the *Homiliarium* of Charlemagne, to which Luther and the German preachers generally then held, were in many respects no longer in harmony with those of the Roman Missal.

On the *Homiliarium* of Charlemagne, see my article "Homiliarium" in Herzog-Plitts *Realencyklopädie*, 2 Aufl., and Cruel, *Geschichte der deutschen Predigt im Mittelalter*, 1879, S. 47 ff. The fuller discussion of the points indicated here belongs to liturgics.

To select sections for reading out of the Old Testament Scriptures for public worship, was the custom in the Synagogues already in the time of Christ and the apostles; Luke iv. 16 ff., ἀνίστη ἀναγνῶναι the Book of Isaiah (where the Lord himself therefore chose *freely*); Acts xiii. 15, ἀνάγνωσις τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν; xv. 21, "Moses being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." The fifty-four sections into which the law was divided for Sabbath reading were, as is well known, called *Parashi* (פְּרָשִׁי separavit), and the sections from the prophets were called *Hapthari* (פְּטָר)

*dimisit*, dismissal or concluding portions). (Cf. Acts xiii. 43, λυθείσης δὲ τῆς συναγωγῆς). When the *present* Jewish order of lessons was fixed cannot be determined. *This usage passed from the synagogue into the Christian Church*, at first in the case of the *Old Testament*, and then gradually also in the case of the *New Testament Scriptures*. Justin Martyr, in his First Apology, already reports of this custom: "On the *ἡμέρα τοῦ ἡλίου* the Christians come together, and then the *ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων ἢ τὰ συγγράματα τῶν προφητῶν* are read, to which the president adds an exhortation." Tertullian also (*De prescript. haeret.*) testifies that the reading in Church embraced the Gospels and Epistles. But we do not find in his works a definite *order of reading*. In the selection of particular passages great diversity evidently prevailed in the individual Church provinces. A distinctive reading of Scripture was developed in the Greek, Alexandrian, Armenian, Syrian, and Ethiopian Churches, and also in the North African, Capuan, Gallican, Milanese, and Roman Churches.

The *Roman Lectionary*, on which also our evangelical order of lessons rests, traces its earliest origin, according to the more recent investigations, to the *Comes* of Jerome (*d.* 420), of which, however, only the introductory *Epistola ad Constantium* remains to us in the original; but the whole is preserved in two somewhat diverse editions of Pametius and Baluzius. The complete construction of this work, according to Hagenbach, belongs indeed to a later time, but its primitive elements might nevertheless be placed in the time of Jerome, who, according to Rothe, is believed to have drawn up a selection of lessons between 382 and 384 A.D. Here for the first time we come across a fixed *plan of lessons*, as Jerome says, he has "taken from the fulness of Scripture that which is *appropriate to the particular festival days* and arranged it in exact order." Damasus then sanctioned this order for the Roman Church. Hence in the whole of the Middle Ages also the authorship was attributed to Jerome, *e.g.* by von Berno, the learned Abbot of Reichenau (*d.* 1048), and subsequent writers. The oldest traces of the Roman liturgy certainly belong to the fifth century, and therefore come very near the time of Jerome. Further development continued from then down to the times of the successors of Charlemagne, who help the Roman liturgy more and more to gain authority over

the liturgy of the individual provinces. And, as it was for the liturgy generally, so *for the fixing of the lessons the mass-canon of Gregory I. was of decisive importance.* He took those lessons of the *Comes*, in expanded form, as lessons not merely for the festival days, but also for the holy days and for the individual "hours of devotion" on them, and thus they were introduced by law into the Roman Church. England, France, and Spain still kept *their own lectionaries*, until Charlemagne introduced the Roman order in his Empire.

This is the origin of the Church lessons in our Western Church. To preach on them was still quite optional.

But we now find the lessons subsequently applied as texts for sermons in the Anglo-Saxon Church, in the case of Bede, in whose two books, *Homiliarium Evangelii*, it is, however, difficult to distinguish the genuine homilies of Bede from the others (those on the Sundays after Epiphany certainly point to a later time). The *pericopae* were, however, formally fixed, not merely as lessons, but also as texts for sermons by that collection of homilies which Charlemagne caused to be prepared by Paulus Diaconus for the use of the clergy. The Trinity season is not so named as yet, but *is divided into different groups*. Thus the *Comes* of Alcuin enumerates the four Sundays after Whitsunday, 5 post natale Apostolorum, 5 post S. Laurentii, hebdoma prima mensis vii., 6 post S. Angeli, and, finally, 4 ante natum Domini. The names of the Sundays between Epiphany and Easter, *Innocentii*, *Reminiscere*, *Oculi*, etc., are taken from the first word of the Latin Psalms, which are included in the introitus of the mass.

A fixed *universal* order for the whole of the Church year was, however, not easily arranged. Only the *festival* lessons were the same in all dioceses. But in *different dioceses different lessons* were added to these for the days preceding and following the festival. Besides, new *festival and holy days* were being added, which did not find acceptance everywhere at once, and in 1264 even a new festival, *Corpus Christi*, was added under Urban iv. Moreover, the Romish Missal itself experienced various *revisions*, until it was fixed at the Council of Trent. Thus the differences between Charlemagne's *Homiliarium* and the Romish Missal became greater and greater, and when at length it became necessary to choose between the two,



Luther and the German Reformation held to the former. For the 25th to the 27th Sundays after Trinity there were still no lessons. Luther selected such, and the appropriate eschatological ending of the old lectionary year is his work.

From this it follows that *a fixed plan for the whole system of lessons*, apart from the festival seasons, can *no longer exist*. There is the additional fact that the number of lessons in the liturgies of the Middle Ages was a much larger one, since much longer sections of the Bible were arranged even as lessons for the *week-day* services, especially for the Friday "hours," and that then by the gradual omission of the latter in the evangelical Churches, the connection which, originally, really existed in many cases was greatly broken in the Sunday lessons which remained by themselves. Hence the attempt lately made by Liseo, Höfling, Wirth, Dieffenbach, etc., to attach a definite connection, a doctrinal *schema*, to the rather planless series of lessons, must ever be a failure, although in the idea of the Church year *in itself* (see below, under ( $\beta$ )) an orderly progress is not to be ignored.

We therefore here answer in the negative—and this along with Ranke, Nitzsch, Kliefoth, Palmer, and others—the question whether a fixed plan and connection does not dominate the present order of lessons. But we do not deny, at the same time, that the idea of the Church year as such,—as indeed the sequence of the festivals from Christmas to Whitsuntide shows,—and also the lessons for the festival cycles, give evidence of a systematic progress. But to extend this plan and progress to the *whole* of the old lectionary, and especially to the season after Trinity, cannot succeed without violence and great artificiality. And why not? Just because the number of lessons is a much smaller one than in the Middle Ages. Then, through the allocation of large sections of Scripture for the week-day lessons of the many fast and feast days, especially for the Friday "hours," a connection really existed, at least in part, between the Sunday lessons. *But since the Reformation these week-day lessons, Friday "hours," etc., which made the bridge from one Sunday lesson to the next,*

*gradually disappeared.* In this way gaps arose in the reading of connected passages, *e.g.* some of our Lord's discourses, and the connection between the Sunday lessons was interrupted. Then the attempt was made, in order to restore the connection, *to read consecutively complete books*, in Lutheran and Reformed countries, instead of the customary system of lessons. And this consecutive reading exists still in our day *in the Anglican Church*, which in the Prayer-Book divides the whole of holy Scripture into sections for each day of the year, and in such a way that the Old Testament is read once a year according to its most essential contents, the New Testament (with the exception of the Apocalypse, of which only a few passages are read) three times a year, and the Psalms as much as twelve times, *i.e.* once a month. But since divine service is not, of course, held every day (except in the cathedrals), in the ordinary churches the lessons appointed for the day are read on the Sunday and week-day services, while it is left to the people to read at home the lessons which are omitted. The connection therefore actually exists here only on paper (except in the cathedral services), and smaller or larger gaps occur every week.

This *consecutive reading* of whole books *was soon given up again in Germany and Geneva*, since in this way too much of the material for reading, and that which was assigned to the week-day services, was not heard at all by the majority of the people. And at length the old system was adopted again, but just *in that abrupt form occasioned by the omission of the week-day lessons.*

Thus, then, the old series of lessons stands before us to-day in a very disconnected form, as, indeed, it was even drawn up in part without a plan, especially in the periods that lie between the festival seasons, and particularly in the period after Trinity. The attempts, chiefly originating with friends of the compulsory lectionary, to discover a conscious, prearranged *schema*, a systematic connection, in the lessons, must therefore ever fail by reason of their artificiality. So it was with the very forced attempts of Lisco, Wirth, Palmié, Matthäus. Recently Dieffenbach, for example (*Evang. Hausagende*, 3 Aufl. Mainz, 1866, Einleitung), thought he had discovered the whole plan of salvation

in the Sunday lessons of the period after Trinity: The Gospel Call and its Acceptance, Trinity Sunday to the 5th Sunday after Trinity: Illumination, 6th to 10th; Conversion, 11th to 14th; Sanctification, 15th to 23rd; Perfection, 24th to 26th Sunday after Trinity. But with the exception of the gospel for Trinity Sunday (Nicodemus) and those for the three last Sundays after Trinity (the end of all things, the final separation, and the ten virgins), which refer to the beginning and the completion of the acceptance of salvation, the passages that lie between must be greatly forced in order to fit them into the *ordo salutis*.

In spite of this want of strict arrangement and order in the system of lessons, *weighty reasons* could be maintained by *the defenders of the compulsory lectionary* for preaching, as by Löhe, Liebetrut, Ahlfeld, Palmer, Nebe, Vilmar (*Pastoraltheologie*, S. 69), etc. For the order of the Church year based on the festival seasons and the circles that centre round them, the *pericopae* are not, it is said, inappropriate, and have indeed, in part, been very beautifully chosen. The variety afforded by them is adequate for the development therefrom of all fundamental truths of Christianity. For many, to whom the choice of a text is difficult, the Church selection is a welcome guide. The free selection of texts from all the books of the Old and New Testaments is, it is said, a much more fragmentary thing than the passages in the lectionary; and besides, the congregation is thus left too much to the pleasure, or at any rate to the subjective taste, of the preacher, whereas the lessons prevent such one-sidedness, and even form a certain defence against unbelief. For sermons of correction or reproof, the text which has not been chosen by oneself, but has been appointed by the Church, has, in the often unsought opportunity thus afforded, a certain justification and authority. The continually recurring lessons impress themselves more easily on the hearer than a freely-chosen text which perhaps does not recur. Since the sermon in itself represents the free, personal element, a text provided

by the Church ought to be the firm link by which that subjective element is bound to the objective worship, requiring fixed rules. The Church feeling is thus promoted and the bond of Church unity is thus strengthened. But especially with the help of this *Comes* our congregations become more accustomed to the Church year, and thus the Gospels become part and parcel of their Sunday. As every festival sets forth a fundamental fact of salvation, so also every Sunday in a subordinate way has some important element in the history or doctrine of salvation to set forth, and thus receives a definite character, a distinctive colour. By this kind of Sunday calendar the Church life is, it is said, more closely connected with the citizen life; the kingdom of God and its history takes a firmer hold of the daily life, the Church year of the world's year.

In all this we recognise some advantages, and quite understand that in an evangelical State Church which has *no Bible lesson*, as in Württemberg, *the need of a Church selection* from the whole material of Scripture, of some kind of united regulation of the services, is *much greater* than where this unity already exists in the prescribed *lesson*, and hence the regulation of the sermon-text also is unnecessary. But it is really a defect, a want, where a Church lectionary, with some liturgy, is lacking. The human discourse dominates too much over the Word of God, the personal over that which belongs to the universal Church. And yet the *disadvantages* of the compulsory lectionary for preacher and for congregation are, on closer consideration, much greater than the advantages.

These advantages which are really, in part, to be recognised are, however, partially attained also by preserving the *pericopae* for the Sunday liturgical *Scripture lesson*, but in part also, they are, when more closely tested, seen to be *doubtful*. The one-sided treatment of Scripture according to subjective taste, rationalistic arbitrariness and unfaithfulness are not, as the history of preaching shows, thereby excluded. Luther's reason for retaining the *pericopae* as sermon-texts, which in the time of the Reformation

was quite a valid one, that few preachers were yet in a position to expound an evangelist through and through, cannot, with the advanced theological education of the clergy, be held as applicable for later times. Even freely chosen texts, when thoroughly and profitably handled, may impress themselves firmly, nay for ever, upon the mind. The pastor must derive his authority for sermons of reproof, not so much from the fact of a lesson recurring exactly in its order, as from his divine commission and his pastoral duty generally. The feeling of Church fellowship is by no means more strongly developed, even where the lessons predominate most strictly, than in Churches where the choice of texts for preaching is free. The assigning of some element in the history or doctrine of redemption to each Sunday, when we consider how many Sundays there are, especially in the long series after Trinity, can never so impress itself upon the memory, that each Sunday should retain in the mind of the whole congregation a distinctive character in consequence of its Gospel or its Epistle, and certainly not at all where two or more yearly courses are in use in the Church.

But to this we must add, not merely *serious disadvantages and dangers which result from the compulsory use of the lectionary*, but also *decisive positive reasons for the free choice of the text*. The old yearly course of *pericopæ* in its present form, apart from the want of a continuous plan and progress, is not only in some parts quite unsuitable (*e.g.* the gospel for the Tuesday in Whitsun-week), selected with rather strong emphasis on the miracles and in the Epistles with a predominating moral bias, and also with the omission of some of the most beautiful and important appropriate passages (*e.g.* the awaking of Lazarus, the story of the woman of Samaria, of Martha and Mary, and especially of the indispensable Parable of the Prodigal Son, whilst several very important gospels—the Transfiguration of Christ, the Parable of the Ten Virgins, etc.—are relegated to Sundays at the end of the Epiphany and Trinity period

which seldom occur), and is therefore much in need of improvement, as even those on the other side admit (Palmer), but *large portions of Scripture are hardly used at all, or are used far from suitably*, as is the case with the *Acts of the Apostles*, and still more with *the whole of the Old Testament*, which, except on the Feast of the Epiphany (Isa. ix. 1-6), is not represented at all. In this way a *comprehensive knowledge of the whole of Scripture*, and of its organic unity is made the more difficult, as a thorough treatment of the larger, more important passages in a series of sermons,—such as the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, the parables in Matt. xiii., the seven Epistles to the Churches in the Apocalypse,—which would be very desirable even at the principal services, is impossible. Hence in respect of Scripture knowledge, especially of the Old Testament, an average German congregation is generally notably behind English Protestantism. Moreover (even though the maxim that every sermon should be suited to the occasion does not hold good without limitation), with prescribed texts *the necessary attention to the present special needs and circumstances of the congregation is made too difficult* for the preacher, as is also the *free outpouring of his own spiritual life*, of the truths and experiences of life which have been affecting him throughout the week. In this way not only is the congregation's desire to learn, which should always remain fresh, easily hindered and weakened, so that at length many have no conception of the inexhaustible riches of Scripture, but even the preacher, who is spared the trouble of a spontaneous choice of text, only too often falls into a *rut* equally injurious to himself and the people, and into a lazy use of old material, or, in order to produce always something new on the old text, into unnatural artificiality (cf. J. B. Carpzov, *Hodegeticum*, 1656, with his hundred methods of division), and at least *attempts* digressions to subordinate points. Finally,—and this is completely decisive,—by this prohibition of half the Bible the congrega-

tion has its *precious right to the whole Bible* (Rom. xv. 4), to the revealed truth of God in its full connection, somewhat *curtailed*, and the preacher, who is bound to declare as perfectly as possible “the whole counsel of God” (*πᾶσαν τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ*, Acts xx. 27, xxvi. 22, 23), is considerably hindered in the fulfilment of this sacred duty, in the full discharge of his divine commission! (Gal. v. 1). Hence Luther partly, and still more Calvin, Spener, and then Arnold, Reinhard, Schleiermacher, Cl. Harms, Herder, Nitzsch, Schweizer, and most modern homiletes, even Krauss, have declared themselves emphatically against the compulsory use of the lectionary, which, according to Luke iv. 16, 17, was not even in the synagogue lessons at the time of Christ a rule without exceptions.

It is, no doubt, rather severe a judgment for the *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung* and, after it, Stier to say that “the *pericopæ* have in them a Catholic element in the evil sense of the word; a semi-pelagian interest has unmistakably prevailed in their selection: the Gospels have been selected in a certain seeking after miracles and with a clinging to the externals of the gospel, the Epistles almost entirely in a kind of bias towards mere morality.” But still there is something true in it. The above-mentioned important passages should not on any account be wanting, whilst others might be omitted. Beautiful as is the gospel (John iii. 16–21) *for the Tuesday in Whitsun-week*, yet it does *not treat specially of the Holy Spirit*, and how many passages referring to Him could be found! The gospel for Trinity Sunday (Nicodemus) does, indeed, treat of Father, Son, and Spirit, and should not be omitted; but the fundamental passage for the Feast of the Trinity is the baptismal command, and this should be given here, as is, indeed, the case in the two years’ course of the Rhine province. Hear, for instance, the complaint of Reinhard in the preface to his *Sermons*, 1804: “The *pericopæ* are partly very badly chosen, and are far from effective.” Especially defective is, however, the *very unequal selection from the different books of Scripture*, in which the Old Testament is almost entirely overlooked.

From this cause it arises that in the congregations with

the compulsory use of the *pericopae*, there is so little *comprehension of the organic unity of Scripture*, of the whole plan of God's kingdom, and therefore also the easy abandonment of this or that portion, the easy entrance of unbelief. The Old Testament has sadly come into discredit in Germany, and if once it is got out of the way, the New Testament also will be easily dispensed with.

Along with this there is the impossibility of *treating thoroughly a course of teaching* in consecutive sermons, which is indispensable to a deeper understanding of Scripture. "How much the knowledge of the whole of Scripture grows in this way with the knowledge of the connection of one or several leading Scripture passages, how the fellowship between the hearer and the preacher increases, how much the whole work of edification is furthered, because each structure is well founded, and in turn becomes itself a foundation!" (Nitzsch). In this way only does the congregation, as a rule, receive an idea of the infinite riches of Scripture truth.

Another disadvantage of the compulsory *pericopae* is that we are often very perceptibly hindered in the necessary *consideration of the present needs of the congregation*. After the arrival of the news of the victory of Sedan, the gospel in the regular order for the 12th Sunday after Trinity, 1870, was in Württemberg the passage (Mark vii. 31-37) on the deaf and dumb man: in that case the sermon was preached almost everywhere on the last sentence only, "He hath done all things well." No doubt the sum and substance of Christian truth are contained in the *pericopae*, and many believing preachers on the *pericopae* have therefore provided not badly for their flocks, even though they only preached on the selected lessons, *e.g.* Ludw. Hofacker! But violence has often to be done to the *pericopae* in order to introduce what is specially in one's heart in consideration of the circumstances of the time, etc., or else we must adhere to them somewhat loosely, as Ludw. Hofacker, for example, often does. The demand that "every sermon should be a 'special' sermon" (Löfler, and especially Zinse, *Die Rückkehr zur apostolischen Predigt* ["The Return to Apostolic Preaching"], Itzhoe, 1861) is, in this application of it, wrong, for the congregation has not a quite *special* need every Sunday, which the preacher, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, must take note of, make his own, and choose



his text accordingly. But there is this amount of truth in it, that the sermon ought to be a real living act and not an artificial abstraction: this living act, however, must be produced from the life of the congregation as well as from one's own spiritual life, and these are too rich and many-sided to be always limited by the bounds of the *pericopae*, without now and then being injured thereby. Hence just the best and most living preachers in the Lutheran State Churches have frequently asked their Consistorium to release them from compulsory use of the *pericopae* (W. Hofacker and others). Others, however, if they had already preached ten times on one lesson, and yet shrunk from repeating an old sermon, have, in order to find something new, had to twist and turn the *pericopae* in a very one-sided and forced manner, so as to let them appear in a new aspect.

From this results the further disadvantage that this new matter, laboriously and often artificially obtained, *is not produced with sufficient freshness from the heart of the preacher*, does not flow forth with sufficient directness from his ever-expounding knowledge of Scripture and spiritual experience, and therefore often has not the *adequate force of personal testimony*. New treasures of divine wisdom almost daily force themselves upon the mind of a preacher who is a daily reader of the Bible, and leads a "Bible-life," which he feels inwardly moved to expound to his congregation; very often, but by no means always, the *pericopae* afford him the opportunity to do so. And yet it is certainly a good advice: "Whatever has most powerfully moved you, most deeply taken hold of you during the week, give that out on Sunday to the people. Such subjective sermons will become the greatest objective force in the hearts of your hearers" (Nesselmann, xlviiii).

And as the preacher's free movement and fresh enjoyment are hindered, so also is the *right desire of the congregation for learning*. It is an indisputable fact, and is moreover sufficient to show the injurious effect of the compulsory use of the *pericopae*, that as a general rule the desire for biblical Church teaching is much greater in congregations which are without the compulsory *pericopae* than in those where the compulsion prevails. And quite naturally. It has a much greater charm, and awakens much greater attention to hear texts that are always new or unknown beforehand, to see verses or passages of Scripture

which were perhaps little noticed before, more fully expounded and revealed in their depths, so that they become points of light which cast light upon their whole surroundings, and thus the whole Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments ever become clearer and brighter, and therefore more precious, whilst with the compulsory *pericopae* vast portions are condemned to perpetual night and darkness.

And as it is a hindrance to a richer blessing, so also the prescription of the *pericopae* is a temptation to the preacher, and thus also to the congregation, to get into a rut. Leading-strings are for children, not for grown people. A prescribed text is good for beginners, who have as yet little tact in selection, little knowledge of Scripture and experience; but when living, believing, and experienced preachers are continually kept in leading-strings by the Church authority in all the functions of their office down to the very smallest, then the leading-strings easily become a pillow to sleep on. "The gospel for the day is as familiar to them as their own house, in which they can go about blindfold. The two or three themes on which they have already preached from it, suit them equally well: the well-known exposition of the words and meaning is always at hand; introduction, proposition, divisions arise unsought before the mind, and all the material comes as if of itself" (Cl. Harms, i. S. 68 ff.). In this way the making of a sermon becomes too easy and too much of a manufacture; the "divine service" thus ceases so easily to be a service which costs us something; and, besides, the world is full of printed sermons on the *pericopae*, and it is natural to depend too much on good examples.

Then, in view of this great temptation, the question also is appropriate: "Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts xv. 10).

But finally the one question is absolutely decisive: Who gives us a right so completely to ignore large parts even of the New Testament? Let it not be said that there is opportunity enough even in occasional addresses, week-day sermons, and Bible-reading to touch upon other parts. Very few take the trouble to attend the week-evening service; Bible-classes cannot be attended by all; Sunday remains the Day of the Lord and of the Lord's Word, the day for sowing with full and free, not with tied, hands. The preacher on the *pericopae* is like a sower whose arm is bound from the

shoulder to the elbow; it has no doubt some movement lower down; but in order to scatter broadly and fully enough, the whole arm ought to be free!

*To sum up:* "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage!" (Gal. v. 1).

Upon the defenders of the compulsory use of the *pericopae* we lay the "burden of proof, that the idea and aim of preaching or its history, or the idea of the Church year, or the system of doctrine, or any law of order justifies or demands just this choice and sequence—and no other—of sermons from the Gospels and Epistles for festivals and Sundays" (Nitzsch, S. 86). The same author says: "There is nothing more erroneous in Palmer's *Homiletik* than what he has taken the trouble to advance in favour of the exclusive use of the *pericopae*, and against the free choice of a text." Luther did, indeed, in his respect for Church tradition, retain in his *Kirchenpostille* the old lessons as completed by him, "because (as mentioned above) there are so few of the clergy who can treat of a whole evangelist powerfully and profitably, and because therewith we shall prevent the licence of sectaries and fanatics." But on week-days he preached through whole books of the Bible; and even in the *pericopae* he had much to find fault with; they appear to him sometimes too short, now too long, and, again, not suitable generally. For Sunday afternoons, under 'Vespers,' he gave permission to preach on the Old Testament in its connection. On the Lutheran side, it should not be forgotten that Luther sometimes spoke strongly enough against some of the *pericopae* and the character of them generally, that he complained "that from St. Paul's Epistles mostly those passages were chosen which treated of external walk and exhortation;—whoever prescribed them was very unlearned, and thought too much of works."

Spener (*Theol. Bedenken*, iii. S. 128) complains: "How heartily did I wish that we had never admitted in our Churches the use of the *Pericoparum evangelicarum*."

Herder (see *Brömel*, ii. S. 32) compares the compulsory use of the *pericopae* to a fence in the garden of Scripture, which prevents the man who is imprisoned within it from enjoying any fruits outside it, compels him to walk every year certain steps up and down, and finally permits him to preach on the three letters of the word "and."

*Result.*

Let us therefore leave the *pericopæ* standing as the Church Lectionary, though in revised form and completed by further yearly courses (whether much longer passages of Scripture should be used for this purpose is another question, and one that belongs to liturgies), and let us recognise in them the value of a venerable Church custom, and, at the same time, for beginners a guide in the choice of texts which, on the whole, is very useful, to which also it must always be left free to have recourse for the sermon; yet the disadvantages of the *compulsory use* of the *pericopæ* for the choice of the *text*, its injurious effects upon preacher and people, are so many and serious, and, on the other hand, the advantages of the free choice of texts—partly for the preacher in relation to the independence and spontaneity, the variety, freshness, and directness of his testimony, and partly for the people and their growth in deeper and more complete knowledge of Scripture—are so many and important, that the *free choice of the text*, which prevails in most of the Evangelical Churches, and, as a matter of fact, proves itself to be by far the most rich in blessing, is *much to be preferred*.

(β) THE CHOICE OF HOMILETICAL MATERIAL AND SUBJECT IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH YEAR, OR THE CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL TIMES AND DAYS.

HILDEBRANDT, *Das Kirchenjahr in seiner Gliederung und Bedeutung*, 1886.

THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH YEAR. — The Christian Church year, resting not upon positive enactment of Christ and the apostles, but growing up freely from the needs of Church worship, the epochs of whose historical development can be accurately enough defined, but whose foundation clearly lies in the development, for festivals, of the story of the life of Christ, is, in accordance with its

true and systematically progressive idea, *a sort of confession of faith*, and not so much Trinitarian (Dieffenbach) as essentially *soteriological in its import*. The principal features are not so much those of the threefold office (Höfling, Nebe, and others) as of the *Life of Jesus*; His incarnation, His saving life, work, sufferings, and death, His victory down to His ascension, and the sending of the Spirit, are to be celebrated in succession. They form the clue to the whole web. It is usually divided into a first half, *with festivals*, and a second half, *without festivals*; or, better still,—inasmuch as Whitsuntide is reckoned in the second half,—into a *half-year of the Lord* and a *half year of the Church*; or into the Church's confession of *objective* salvation purchased by Christ (the Christmas,—Easter circle), and of *subjective* salvation, *i.e.* of the acceptance of this salvation both for the individual and for the Church (the Whitsuntide season and the Trinity season). The first half, the half-year of the Lord, is for the most part comprehended under the superscription: *This have I done for thee*, and the second, the half-year of the Church, under the question: *What hast thou done for Me?* The former shows more the coming of the kingdom of God to us; the latter rather gives directions for our coming into this kingdom. Hence, therefore, in the former chiefly the procuring of salvation: in the latter the acceptance of it. At the same time, so far as the old series of *pericopæ* is concerned, this inner progress is only to be clearly recognised in bold outlines, but a strict systematic unity of detail is not perceptible.

As the result of the necessary attention to this inner progress in the import of the different festival seasons and their special character, the *choice of homiletic material* undergoes, according to almost general agreement (with the exception of the English and American Dissenters and Free Churches, and of the Scotch, who, after Calvin's example, observe Sunday only), *an essential limitation*, and the task of homiletic treatment a particular direction, which

must form an objective counterbalance on the Church's part to the subjective licence of the free choice of texts.

Steitz, article "Kirchenjahr," in Herzog's *Realencyklopädie*, vii.: *Altes und Neues*, i. Advent, 1869.

Max Frommel, *Herzpostille*: Sermon on First Sunday in Advent: "As the spirit of Christianity penetrated stone and raised noble churches and cathedrals, as it conquered sound and created the glorious chorales and church music, as it took possession of colour and created church pictures, as, above all, this spirit pervaded human speech and created Creed and hymn, so also it has conquered time and traced on the year, on its week-days and Sundays, the image of Christ, and has thus formed the Church year. It also is a cathedral in which the people assemble, it is the most beautiful Church music which is performed all the year, a glorious confession of faith in the form of time" (*Sonntagsgast*, December 1884).

The arrangement of the Church year is admittedly not the result of a calculating reflection, but of an instinctive, free *historical development* of the requirements of worship, in which the *formations of different epochs of growth* can be exactly determined.

*First Epoch.*—From the middle of the second century we meet with two yearly festivals—the *Paschal* and the *Pentecost* seasons, the former a six days' period of sorrow and fasting: the latter a fifty days' period of gladness, dedicated to the memory of the resurrection, ascension, and outpouring of the Spirit.

*Second Epoch.*—But gradually, from the end of the fourth century, Ascension Day is raised in this group to the rank of an independent feast; Easter Sunday is separated from the Pentecostal season, and connected more closely with Passion week, whence the Paschal season is divided into a *πάσχα σταυρώσιμον* and *ἀναστάσιμον*. Since already from the end of the second century *Epiphany* meets us as a special feast, about the end of the fourth century the *Feast of the Nativity* is added to it, and thus there are now formed *three great festival seasons*: the *Christmas*, *Easter*, and *Whitsuntide* cycle. And, as in the Octaves (following Sundays), the principal feast has a sequel (*e.g.* in Easter on Quasimodogeniti), so, before the Paschal and Christmas festivals there appear two periods of preparation: the forty days' fast,

and the period of Advent (which in the Greek Church included forty days also).

In addition to these there are in the ancient Church the *anniversary days of the death of martyrs*, as local and provincial holy days. The more the observance of these memorial days was changed into *eneration of the saints*, the more the memorial days of particular congregations became triumphal festivals of the whole Church, whose significance now rested on the idea of the continued intercession of these saints. The historical doctrinal element is soon transformed into the fantastic and mythical, *e.g.* the oldest feasts of the Virgin Mary (Annunciation and Purification) had been originally *festivals relating to Christ*, and underwent this change of meaning with the growth of Mariolatry. Finally, a saint in the calendar, and therewith a certain festival character, was given to *every* day in the Church year. The Romish appointment of festivals reached its concluding culminating point in the feast of Corpus Christi since 1264.

The Reformers, even Luther, were at first undecided whether they should not in their festival observances return to apostolic simplicity, and confine themselves to the observance of Sunday. But the difference between the Lutheran and the Reformed Church was soon shown in their attitude to tradition. The *Lutheran Church* applied its fundamental axiom, not to reject, but only to purify scripturally the historical development of Catholicism, to the Church year also. Corpus Christi and Saints' Days must be omitted; the feasts of the Virgin, so far as they have ground in the gospel narrative (Annunciation, Purification, Visitation), the feasts of the apostles (but with rejection of the mythical additions, such as the Roman bishopric of Peter), and even the Feast of Michael the Archangel, remained until they afterwards lost their importance in the mind of the Church, and disappeared in most countries. As distinctive additions there were the Harvest, the Memorial,<sup>1</sup> and the Reformation festival, and the general days of penitence and prayer.

The *Reformed Church*, on the other hand, wherever it could strictly carry out its principles, broke completely with the historically inherited rules for worship, as with the human traditions of the Church generally, and in its public

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* memorial of those who have died during the year in the congregation, observed on the Sunday preceding the 1st Sunday in Advent. [Trans.]

worship reverted entirely to apostolic times. *The importance of the Church year never thoroughly appeared to it.* Large bodies of Reformed churches even to-day, so far as Church observance is concerned, know *no other time but Sunday*. In America one may spend the spring in many churches without noticing when Easter comes. In Geneva the Sundays only were observed in Calvin's time; it is only since 1820 that the observance of Good Friday began there. In other Reformed countries Christmas was for a long time the only festival kept on a week-day. The Established Church of England observes Christmas, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Whitsuntide, Lent, and Advent, and the old signification of the Sundays, but has, of course, no days of the apostles. Only the ultra-high Church party in it adheres strictly to the reading of the Church's prayers on the days of the apostles also. But the English and American *Dissenters* and the *Scotch* of all churches still observe no day but Sunday. Yet they have so far, quite involuntarily, to take account of the Church year, that on the Sunday after Christmas, Easter Sunday, and so on, they choose texts referring to the festival season. Even in such cases, therefore, the choice of the text is to some extent determined by the Church year.

There can be no doubt that *a confession of faith* in this system of Church memorial feasts thus gradually historically developed, and the preservation of it, especially of the chief historical facts in the life of Jesus as they are brought every year before the mind of the people in the principal festivals from Christmas to Whitsuntide, and especially in Passion week, is for Germany at anyrate, where criticism now more than ever seeks to do away with these facts, of the greatest importance. Believing Churches can much more easily dispense with the Church year as such and content themselves with Sunday, but we cannot—we, who have, besides, for great masses of the population, scarcely any trace of the Christian Sunday.

*But what idea lies at the base of this confession of faith—the trinitarian or chiefly the soteriological?* The view of the *Trinitarian* character of the Church year dates only from the insertion of the Feast of the Trinity in the series with the others (1334), and is therefore essentially Romish, not interpreting the Church year by itself, but by doctrinal



presuppositions. Thus, *e.g.* Durandus, Bishop of Menda (*ob.* 1296), in his *Brevis explicatio divini officii* (Venice, 1589, p. 350), explains Christmas as the Feast of the Father, Easter as the Feast of the Son, and Whitsuntide as the Feast of the Holy Ghost. And so many still, Dieffenbach, for example. But is not *God the Son* equally commemorated at Christmas and at Epiphany? Does not the eschatological close of the Church year refer more to the rule of the Son than to that of the Spirit? But apart from this, this Trinitarian view has *history simply against it*, the arrangement of the Church year being plainly determined *by the chief facts in the life of Jesus*, and therefore essentially by *soteriological* and not theological considerations. The festival sermons of the Ancient Church *e.g.* those of Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, show this indisputably. There Christmas is the feast of the incarnation of Christ, as is natural, and it is facts in the redemptive life and work of Jesus which are commemorated down to Easter and Whitsuntide.

It is not the Trinitarian idea of God, but *the system of the great facts of salvation*, which "is the clue to the perfect web of the Church year, to which the individual days and festivals are related as the woof" (*Altes und Neues*). This soteriological principle has been rightly recognised by Höfling, Nebe, Alt, Matthäus, Nitzsch, Otto, etc., as the predominant one in the construction of the Church year. But going into detail, they try to find the *threefold office* of Christ developed in the three festival cycles: in the Christian period, the Incarnation and manifestation of Christ as *Prophet*; in the Easter period, His manifestation as *High Priest*; and in Whitsuntide and the Trinity season, His *kingly* office. But do we not read even in the gospel for the 1st Sunday of Advent: "Behold, thy *King* cometh unto thee"? Or when on the Sunday after New Year's Day the young child has to flee into Egypt, is not this already a bearing of the hatred and the sin of the world? Or when, in the gospel for the 4th Sunday after the Epiphany, Christ stills the storm, is not this again a trace of His *kingly* rule? And conversely, when in the Trinity season we find passages from the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables, etc., do these not belong to the *prophetic* manifestation of Christ? The varied series of *pericopae* cannot be fitted, without violence, into any of such schemata!

We say therefore: What can be recognised in this soteri-

ological confession of faith as the plan and progress, as the guiding principle of its development, are simply *the leading features of the life of Jesus*.

Taking the usual divisions into the *festival* and *non-festival* or Trinity half, the characteristic of the former therefore is that, as a rule, it represents rather *Christ for us*, whereas the second lays the emphasis rather on *Christ in us*. There rather the coming of the kingdom of God to us; here rather our coming into the kingdom. There rather the procuring of salvation; here the acceptance of it, without, however, the particular steps in this acceptance being successively developed in the *pericopae*. It is perhaps more correct, instead of dividing, in this external manner, into a festival and a non-festival half, rather to include the *Whitsuntide period in the second half*, so that then neither half is non-festival; and to divide into a *half-year of the Lord* (Advent to Ascension or Jubilate), and a *half-year of the Church* (Whitsuntide or Ascension and the Trinity period), which by the sending of the Spirit is founded on the faith in the Triune God (Trinity festival), and even appropriates to itself more fully that which the Lord has purchased. This, however, makes no difference in the view of the fundamental idea. For even thus the first half contains the confession of the Church's faith in the *objective* salvation effected by Christ, the second the confession of faith in the *subjective* salvation, the acceptance of the former by means of the Spirit for the individual and the Church.

It may be further mentioned that Friedrich Strauss finds in all festival days and Sundays a reference to *the season of the year*. The essence and import of the Church year is salvation, and the sanctified soul sees its own salvation in the picture of the year's course: first, the icy slumber of death, then the awakening to new life, and finally, the bringing forth of fruit in the warm sunshine. The coincidence of Easter with the beginning of a new life in nature no doubt suggested this. But the changes of nature in the different zones must lead to one construction of the Church year in the North, to another in the South, and to another where there are only winter and summer, but no spring and autumn, etc.

(8) *The Festival Seasons*.—The feasts of the Christian Church year group themselves in *three larger series*: the

*Christmas* cycle, surrounded by Advent, the New Year, and the Epiphany period; the *Passion* and *Easter* season, with Lent, Passion week, and Easter week; and the *Whitsuntide* cycle, with the preceding Ascension festival (if this is not attached to Easter; see below) and the succeeding Feast of the Trinity. All these festivals have in common the commemoration of a fact of salvation, which, according to its importance, gives the festival a higher or a lower rank. Since, therefore, there is contained in the very idea of the feast itself the union of the past with the present, of the once-accomplished and historical fact with its permanently effective significance for salvation, the task for the homiletic celebration of it will chiefly consist *in stating the past historical element and the eternal spiritual element of the Christian redemptive facts in the closest connection* (Sack); in drawing forth for ever new acceptance the deep spiritual kernel therein contained, with simple and faithful maintaining of the historical truth of the event commemorated, and conception of it, not as the external shell, but as the inner fruit of the operation of divine love, indispensable to salvation, and as the foundation on which our salvation is based. Hence the festival sermon should not content itself either with the fact in itself and with the proof of its credibility, or, passing by this, emphasise only its spiritual meaning, but it must always combine both, in and with one another. The festival preacher must not, therefore, keep too far away from the special subject of the festival (as often happened towards the end of the eighteenth century); nor should he put too narrow limits to the scope of the festival thoughts, the gospels for the day affording even in their smallest details a richness of material applicable to the present (Nitzsch). Since, moreover, the universal *festival-gludness* and humble *thankfulness* for the great deeds of God should above all find expression in the sermon, a stern denunciation of the fellowship of the world is not very appropriate, but rather the hearty invitation to accept personally the blessings of salvation

offered to us also, and ever new. Besides this, an exalted tone, a festival spirit and real enthusiasm—for which, however, very special hallowing preparation and devout absorption into the festival thoughts are necessary, and which must keep strictly aloof from mere rhetorical bombast—will lend to the sermon, even outwardly, a festive garb.

It is the work of the festival preacher: (1) *To keep the fact as historical truth simply, faithfully, and firmly in view*, and this not as a mere husk which we must throw away as quickly as possible, as Rationalism does, or as the mythical clothing of an idea, but as the *fruit* of the divine activity of the divine love, which, as a fact, is just as truly necessary and indispensable to our salvation as it is, on the other hand, a free unmerited act of God's free grace. (2) *To extract the spiritual kernel, the eternal meaning of this event for our salvation*, and to offer it to us *heartily and earnestly for personal acceptance*.—Neither of these, however, without the other, if errors are to be avoided. If we stop with the fact, proving perhaps the credibility of the witnesses for it, the result would be a dry historical investigation, without festive swing and happy edification. Or if, as often happens, we allow the fact, as at least doubtful, to depend quite upon itself, and go on to speak, say at Easter, only about our new life, about our spiritual resurrection, then faith lacks its true basis, the festive joy its true divinely certain ground, festive devotion its true sacred fire, which, amid the throng of glittering words and phrases, disappears in mere smoke. The real spiritual and profitable application will only be possible if we have previously recognised the fact as such and given God the glory for it; and conversely, the full depth and eternal meaning of the fact will only become clear by its application to the present, to our own heart and life.

*The contents of the sermon are obviously determined, as a rule, and dominated by the object of the festival.* But Nietzsche has justly warned us *against setting too narrow limits to festival topics*. Thus, e.g., Therenin preached on Christmas Day on "The Divine Government of the World"; this is here allowable at the turning-point of history, and is justified also by the reference, in the gospel lesson for the

day, to the decree of Augustus; only, in the case of such somewhat remote themes, everything must still be concentrated on the great gift of salvation. We shall also see that we must be on our guard against too general themes. But it is quite true that we must not set the limits too narrowly, but must show the rich import of the facts of salvation from various points of view, for the many-sided expansion of which almost every word of the festival narratives affords full material.

With reference, finally, to the whole tone, it must of course be a consecrated and *elevated one, breathing the festival spirit*. The congregation has, as Palmer justly observes, a sharp ear and perception for this, and hence we often hear, even from simple folk, the criticism: "The sermon was good, but it was not a festival sermon." It is desirable, when festival seasons are approaching, for the preacher to equip and prepare himself for them, not merely by reflection on the festival thoughts and the appropriate texts, but by special spiritual self-discipline, strict avoidance of everything which disturbs and distracts, by a self-absorption into the thoughts of the feast, prayer, and self-consecration, from which then there flow the true unction, joyousness, and higher animated tone which must give expression to the festival spirit, and may proportionally awaken the true festival spirit. In festival sermons it is especially clear of what spirit the minister himself is, whether he himself has been thoroughly in earnest about the fundamental facts of salvation and their acceptance, or whether he knows how to *testify*, or only to talk about them. This elevated tone of festival joy implies that *reproof and scolding are as a rule not suitable for festival celebrations*, but may easily disturb the festival meditation like a discordant note. Good Friday, for example, is certainly in its very fundamental idea an unequalled penitential sermon in itself: but still, even on this day, the principal task remains to point with humble gratitude to the greatness of this act of salvation, of the love which offered itself to death—

"Nimm hin den Dank für deine Plagen."  
 ["For all Thine agony our thanks."]

And if, in speaking of the weight of these sufferings, we must also point to the greatness and heaviness of our guilt, yet this is not to be done in the festival sermon in a

reproving, scolding tone, as in an ordinary penitential sermon, but in such a way that the speaker identifies himself as a fellow-sinner with the sinful multitude, and therefore rather in a tone of penitential confession, sorrowful, and on the other hand supplicatory for the whole people in a priestly sense—a tone which again must be elevated by the certainty of reconciliation. Here, too, the principal matter is to exhort the members of the congregation in a real winning way to the personal acceptance of the fact which the festival brings afresh to their remembrance, and of the saving grace afresh set before them.

“Tempore laeto laeta dicere convenit,” *Erasm. eccles.* iii. p. 201. A Rationalist like Röhr might indeed preach at the Feast of the Epiphany on “the splendid wretchedness of vice.” But it was certainly much better done when a believing preacher like Georg Konrad Rieger said, in his sermon in 1730 on the jubilee of the Reformation; “There might indeed be much to complain about in our day, but on this day, which the Lord has appointed for delight and honour, we complain of no one.” This was true homiletic tact!

The *Christmas season*, the basis of the other festivals, commemorates the salvation which appeared in the birth of Christ, the Father’s gracious plan for the redemption of the world as manifested in the incarnation of the Word, prospectively and retrospectively. The thoughts which present themselves as the material for preaching in this central miracle of history and of nature, in this turning-point of time, “toward which all history moves and from which it comes,” are both on the *divine side* (the inestimable love of God to the lost, the faithfulness of His promises; the incarnation of the Son of God as the second Adam—an incarnation veiled in impenetrable mystery and yet so necessary; the divine wisdom in the choice of the conditions of time and place, especially of the humble and despised; as also the holy beauty and divine glory in the fulfilment of this loving purpose, and its announcement by the angels, etc.) and on the *human* (the lowliness and accessibility of the royal offspring in the beggar’s dress;

His poverty that maketh rich; the restoration of the fallen race to the nobility of the divine goodwill, accomplished in the incarnation of God's Son; the beginning of the healing of mankind, through the only Pure One, from the sickness of a thousand years; the infinite need of salvation on the part of Jewish and Gentile humanity; its indifference, and yet, to some extent, its longing for redemption; the whole "præludium incarnationis" [Tertullian] in Old Testament types and prophecy, etc.), even if we confine ourselves to the lesson in Luke ii., inexhaustible because all-embracing, and afford an infinitely rich border for the setting of the great *festival joy* over Him who was born for *us*, which should always form the central point in the whole celebration. Besides the lessons for the day in Luke ii. and Tit. ii., such texts suggest themselves as John i. 14, 17, 41, x. 11, iii. 16; Eph. i. 3-8; Rom. viii. 31, 37-39; 2 Cor. viii. 9; 1 Cor. i. 30; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Gal. iv. 4; Phil. iv. 4; Col. i. 12, 13; 1 Tim. ii. 5; Tit. iii. 4; 1 John iii. 1, iv. 3, iv. 9, 11, iv. 14, 19, v. 11, 12; Heb. ii. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16, i. 15, 16; 1 John i. 2; Micah v. 1-3; Isa. ix. 6, xi. 1, 2, vii. 14, lx. 1; Deut. xxxiii. 3; Ps. viii. 5, lxvi. 5, lxxii. 18, 19, exviii. 24, etc.

Derivation of [German word for Christmas] Weihnachten:—Dat. plur. *zen* (*zu = to*) *wihon*, the holy; *nâhten* (Ger. *Nachten*, nights). So Gudrun. Plur.: because the feast embraced several days.

How at first Christmas was solemnised on the 6th January (Feast of the Epiphany), but was then separated from the commemoration of the baptism of Jesus: why next in the West and then in the East it was fixed for the 25th December (not on account of the Saturnalia, but on account of the creation of the world on the 25th March, and therefore the conception of the second Adam on this day also, and his birth nine months later). see Liturgics.

It was only at the end of the fourth century that Christmas was universally in use, after having already prevailed for some time in the West. In 386, Chrysostom had to defend this innovation against several attacks, as already

existing for ten years in the East. It is perhaps no longer possible to find the actual birthday of our Lord, as even Clement of Alexandria says: it certainly was not the 25th December. Augustine says: "Diem, qua traditur natus, non in sacramento celebrari, sed tantum in memoriam revocari, quod natus sit."

With regard to the material for homiletic treatment of the idea of the festival, we must only indicate the extraordinary treasures which unfold themselves to the preacher, even in Luke ii. or John i. alone. The fundamental thought itself—the salvation that has appeared, the Goël become incarnate—is inexhaustible, as Zwingli long ago expressed it: "Christus est gratiæ dei manifestatio, obsignatio, certitudo, imo ipsa dei gratia." How even the great ones of the earth must assist in the fulfilment of the divine plans; the parallel between the first and the second Adam; creation's morn and the holy Christmas night; the light breaking through our darkness: the shepherds keeping watch by night, and then becoming the first evangelists; the divine preference for the quiet people in the country who wait for the redemption of Israel: how heaven and earth put themselves in motion to celebrate this greatest deed of divine love since the creation; the brotherly co-operation of the angels, and their song of praise; then the Babe who makes us brothers, Himself in the manger, or heaven in the lap of earth; the inscription which may be read over the manger by the eyes of faith: how God so loved the world; the great Peace-maker for young and old; the Lord in the city of David: the different receptions He meets with (no room in the inn—He came unto His own, etc.); the work of faith in the acceptance of the Child; Immanuel the anchor of faith: His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, etc.; whether He who was born for us has also been born in us: the new age of peace on earth; "fear not," or the advent of Him who is to crush the serpent; at the sight of the Child become children in holy joy, firm faith, humble thankfulness, etc.—such thoughts and topics flow out to us as in a stream when we devoutly lose ourselves in the idea of the festival and the appropriate texts.

The Christmas festival determines the material, partly for the preparatory *advent-season*, and partly for the following season of New Year and Epiphany, with which



this period closes. The idea of the *Advent season* of four weeks, appointed by Gregory the Great, is a more general one, referring in a general way to the approaching appearance of a Redeemer. We, in our turn, become those who are *waiting* for salvation, partly looking forward to the coming Christmas and the recurring commencement of the Church year, into which the meek and lowly Lord will make His entrance once more: partly looking backward to the historical preparation for Christ's coming, the condition of the world before His coming, its powerlessness to help itself, and specially to the Advent preaching of the Baptist and the Prophets, which should awaken us again, that the dayspring from on high may visit us; and partly, finally, looking out for the second coming of Him who has come and shall come (cf. the Advent lessons). In all this the principal thought is *the preparation of ourselves for the reception of Him who already is standing at the door*, and thus this season, though in a milder degree than that of Lent, partakes also of a *penitential* character. For this the following texts present themselves in addition to the lessons: Matt. iv. 17, vi. 10 ("Thy kingdom come"), xi. 28, 29, xx. 28, xxiv. 3, 14, xxviii. 20; Luke i. 5-25, 26-38, 67-75, 78, 79, iii. 7-9; also the Advent sermon of our Lord at Nazareth, iv. 16 et seq., xii. 35-48, vi. 46, ix. 26, xxi. 25-28; John i. 2, i. 17, 18, iii. 22-36, iv. 24 and 42, vi. 68, 69, viii. 12 and 36, x. 2, xii. 35 et seq., xviii. 36, 37; Rom. i. 16, xiv. 17-19; 1 Cor. vii. 29-31; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Col. i. 12-14, iii. 16; 1 Tim. i. 15, ii. 4, vi. 11-16; 1 Pet. i. 13-16; 1 John iv. 8-11; Jude 14, 15; 2 Pet. iii. 10-14, 18; Heb. i. 1-3; Rev. i. 7-20, xxii. 13; Gen. iii. 15, xlix. 10; Deut. xviii. 15 and 18, 19; Ps. ii. 6, 7, v. 12, xiii. 6, xiv. 7; especially xxiv. 7-10 ("Lift up your heads, O ye gates"! etc.), lxxviii. 5, lxxxiv. 12, xev. 6, exviii. 25, 26 ("Save now, O Lord—blessed is he that cometh," etc.), exxvi. 3; Isa. xl. 3, lxi. 1-3, lix. 16-21, lxii. 10-12; Jer. xxiii. 5-6, xxxiii.

15, 16; Hos. x. 12; Amos iv. 12-13 ("Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel"!); Mal. i. 2.

The succeeding *New Year festival* has not merely a civil meaning in the Church's dedication of the commencement of the civil year, whose increasing number represents a fresh universal birthday, and suggests the Christian thanksgiving and prayer, wish and warning, appropriate to it, but also—being still, as in the ancient Church the "octave" of Christmas, being also the Feast of the Circumcision and the Naming of Jesus—a meaning in the history of salvation and *for the Church*. Even the civil New Year's Day dates its year "Anno Domini," and thus takes pleasure in bearing the *name* of Jesus. If the element of *circumcision* has to be somewhat passed over, as pertaining too much to the Old Testament,—although, according to Rom. ii. 29; Col. ii. 11, even a Christian application of the idea is possible, and this submission of Christ to the yoke of the law remains of importance in the economy of salvation,—yet the consideration of the flight of our days and of the vanity of all things in the light of the *Name of Jesus*, the hallowing of the new year as a year of salvation under the banner of this Name, and the unfolding of the saving depths of this Name—which with its earnest and kindly invitation expresses the nature of the person who was at the same time within human limitations, and which has manifested itself in the history of the world, the Church, and the individual so clearly in its saving power—form a still richer and more grateful material for homiletic treatment. As further texts, we recommend for *New Year's Eve*: Ps. xc., xxxix. 5-7, xxxix. 13 *b*, cii. 24-29, cxxi., cxxxix. 23-24; Isa. xliii. 1; Matt. xxviii. 20 *b*; Heb. xiii. 14; Rev. xxi. 5-7, xxii. 11-14, etc. For *New Year's Day*: Matt. vi. 33, ix. 16-17, x. 29, 30; Luke xii. 22-24, xiii. 6-9 ("Lord, let it alone this year also"!); John ix. 4, xii. 35, 36; Acts iv. 12, xvii. 28; Rom. viii. 31, xii. 11, 12; xiv. 8; 2 Cor. xiii. 13; Gal. vi. 9, 10; Eph. v.

15, 16; Phil. iii. 13, 14; Col. iii. 17; 1 Thess. v. 5-10; 1 Tim. i. 17, iv. 8; 1 Pet. v. 7; 2 Pet. i. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 18; 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9; 1 John ii. 17; Heb. i. 8, x. 35, xiii. 8 ("Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day," etc.); Jas. i. 17, iv. 13-15; Rev. i. 4, ii. 10, xxii. 13; Gen. xxxii. 10; Deut. xxxi. 6, xxxii. 3, 4 and 7, v. 47; Jos. xxiv. 15, or 14-28; 1 Sam. vii. 12; 1 Chron. xxx. 15; Job x. 12; Ps. v. 12, 13, xiii. 6, xxiii. xxv. 10, xxvii. 14, xxviii. 8, 9, xxxi. 15, 16, xxxvi. 6-8, xxxvii. 4, xxxix., l. 14, 15, lxxvii. 6, xc. 2-6, 10-12, cii. 25-27 ("Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure, . . . and Thy years shall have no end"), ciii. 2, 15, 16, cxvi. 12, cxix. 19, 119, 59 and 175, cxxi. 7, 8 ("The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil," etc.), cxxii. 6, 7, cxxxvi. 1, cxxxix. 16, 16-18, 23-24, cxliii. 10, cxliv. 3 and 15, cxlvi. 5, 6; Prov. iii. 5-7, xi. 23; Ecces. i. 4, 9-11, xii. 13, 14; Isa. xli. 10 ("Fear thou not; for I am with thee; . . . will strengthen thee; . . . will help thee: . . . will uphold thee"), xliii. 3, lxi. 1-2, lxx. 16, 17; Jer. vi. 16, xvii. 7; Lam. iii. 22, 23; Ezek. iii. 16-21, xxxiii. 7-16, 30-33 (penitential sermon for warning); Dan. ii. 20, 21.

*The Feast of the Epiphany*, the oldest of this season, which has been in the usage of the Church since the end of the second century, called in the East *ἡ ἀγία τῶν φῶτων ἡμέρα*, and in the West *festum trium regum*, changed its original significance as the feast of the *Baptism* and also of the *Birth* of our Lord, on which He was revealed to men by the descent of the Holy Spirit and the voice, "This is My beloved Son," — *ἐπιφάνεια*, according to Tit. ii. 11, iii. 4,—at a later time to the commemoration of the coming of the *Wise Men from the East* (appearance of the star, *ἐπιφάνεια*), and therefore in modern times became more and more a *missionary* festival. In both cases the common foundation-thought of the festival is the appearance of Jesus from the obscurity of the holy Christmas

night into the light of clearer revelation to the Gentile world. The seeking after light in the ancient world, which led to the truth; the connection of the higher revelation with natural knowledge (the message of the star); the preparation for the higher by the lower stages of revelation, if these are rightly used; the supplementing of the light of natural revelation by that of the holy Scriptures (pointing to Bethlehem); the light of both harmoniously uniting in Bethlehem; the yearning after light and truth in the heathen world abundantly confirmed by the history of modern missions, as also the seeking and finding of the Lord by the individual human heart; the drawing of people to the Son by the Father in all kinds of ways, the divine provisions for the gathering of the heathen, the hindrances and advances of the kingdom of God, and the fulfilment of many prophecies shown in the latter—all these supply abundance of material. Besides Isa. xlii. 1–8, xlix. 1–13, lx. 1–6; Matt. ix. 35–38; 2 Thess. iii. 1–5 (see below), and Rev. xxi. 24 (“The nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it”), we may recommend all kinds of *missionary texts*, such as Gen. xii. 3; Ex. xvii. 11 (“when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed,” etc.); Neh. vi. 16; Ps. ii. 8 (“Ask of me,” etc.), xxii. 28, 29, l. 1–2, lxxviii. 31, 32 (“Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God”), lxxii. 8–9, 10–11, 17–19, lxxxvii. 6, xvi. 10, xvii. 1, exlv. 10–13; Isa. ii. 2, 3 (“the mountain of the Lord exalted above the hills,” etc.), ix. 2 (“the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light”), xi. 10, xix. 24, 25, xxiv. 16, xxv. 7, xxxvi. 15, xl. 5, xlii. 5–8, 10–12, xliii. 6, 7, xliv. 3–5, xlv. 23, 24, liii. 12, lv. 5, lxxv. 1 (“I am sought of them that asked not for me”); Jer. iii. 19, xvi. 16, 19–21; Ezek. xxxiv. 31; xxxvii. 3 ff. (coming to life of the dry bones); Dan. ii. 44, vii. 14; Hos. iii. 5; Amos ix. 11, 12; Hab. ii. 14 (the earth full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters, etc.); Zeph. ii. 11, iii. 9; Hag. ii.

6, 7; Zech. viii. 22; Mal. i. 11; Matt. viii. 11, ix. 37, 38, xii. 18-21; 41-42, xiii. 31-32, 47, xxi. 43, xxiv. 14, xxviii. 18-20; Mark i. 17, xvi. 15; Luke i. 79, ii. 30-32, iii. 6, v. 4, 5, xii. 49, xiii. 30, xiv. 22, 23, xv. 6 and 32, xix. 10, xxiv. 46, 47; John iii. 16, iv. 35, v. 25, vi. 9, x. 16 ("other sheep I have, which are not of this fold"), xii. 24 and 32, xviii. 37; Acts i. 8, ii. 39, 41, iv. 29, viii. 35-38 (the Ethiopian treasurer), x. 34, 35, xi. 18 ("Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life"), xiii. 2-3, 48-49, xiv. 16 and 27, xv. 3, xvi. 9, xvii. 23 and 30, xxii. 21, xxviii. 28; Rom. i. 5, iii. 29 (for Jewish missions, ix. 4, x. 1, xi. 23-24, 25, 32, 33), x. 13-15, xv. 9-12; Gal. iii. 8; Eph. ii. 17, 18; 2 Thess. iii. 1 ff.; 1 Tim. ii. 4-6; 1 John iii. 8; Rev. vi. 9-11 (martyrs), vii. 9, 10 (a great multitude, etc.), xiii. 10, 11, xv. 4, etc.

In this mass of texts for the different festivals, which, however, does not profess to be at all complete, we have an actual proof how good it is not to be always limited to the "Lessons," and how rich is the material outside the *pericopæ*; but also especially a proof how rich the Old Testament is as a mine of texts for all festivals and also for special occasions.

With regard to the origin of the *Advent* celebration, it may only be noticed that Roman Catholic liturgists place it back in the most remote antiquity, but probably erroneously. The first trace in the East is found among the Nestorians in the fifth century, and in the West in Maximus of Turin, about 450. It was only in the sixth century that the celebration became more widespread. The Greek Church extended the four weeks to forty days, so that this season of preparation should correspond to that before Easter. We called the *Advent-idea* a *general* one, referring to the appearance of a Redeemer in a general sense. The second meaning given to the Advent season as the beginning of the Church year suits this quite well; for "the Church itself, as well as all preaching and worship, rests on the fact that a Redeemer, a kingdom of God, have come" (Palmer, S. 219). Ranke, however, rightly says (*Das kirchliche Perikopensystem*, S. 375): "It is not easy to comprise in one idea the thoughts which

the ancient Church associated with Advent; for now it is the preparation for the second coming of Christ to judgment, now the preparation for the Christmas festival, and again the remembrance of the historical preparations for the incarnation of Christ, which appear before us in the early notices of the Advent season." Nevertheless, the one common idea may be found in the *preparation for the coming of the Redeemer generally*, in connection with which we may look back to what mankind *would be* without Jesus, to its natural lost estate, etc. Hence it has been said that the Advent season "represents the doctrine of the fall of man, his inability to recover himself, and his yearning for help" (Conrady), and in this connection it has been pointed out that the Church of the sixth century kept Advent as a season of fasting and penitence. We may, and must, it is true, in connection with our Lord's advent, look back at the condition of sinfulness which made this coming necessary, but it is quite incorrect to say that the Church at this time commemorates the fall, etc.

With regard to the *New Year festival*, it is true that the Church has in the 1st Sunday in Advent its own New Year's Day, but the civil, temporal life requires also its consecration, and even the civil reckoning of years does not deny its connection with the central point of all time, with Christ; for every new year is the —th year *after the birth of Christ* (with the exception of the French Revolution; Dan. vii. 25: "He shall think to change times and laws"), and is therefore a period of time over which the name and sceptre of our Lord holds sway. When, lately, strict Churchmen, like Löhe, explained the importance of this day as the festival of the New Year to be a secondary matter, and sought, instead of it, to put the Feast of the Circumcision in the foreground, no doubt this is well meant in the interest of the separation of the worldly from the Church's life; but, in the first place, the celebration of the Circumcision is less fruitful for homiletic and liturgical purposes; and, moreover, in this neglect of the observance of the New Year, it is forgotten that *until the eighth century the Church did not presume in the remotest way to commemorate by a festival anything so totally Jewish as the Circumcision*. In the New Year's sermons of the Fathers we do not find a syllable either about the Circumcision or the naming of Jesus. It is only in the sermons of the Venerable Bede (*d.* 735) that we find even a single

“Circumcision sermon.” On the contrary, the ancient Church observed the first day of the year for fasting and penitential litanies, and especially for sermons of reproof, in order to resist the heathen follies which were practised on that day. Against the wild heathen joy, which even in our day still shows itself badly enough on New Year’s Eve, so that the old year is closed in the tumult of drunken revels and the new year begun amid the subsequent wretchedness caused by them, the preacher has to set himself most emphatically. Ps. xc., Eccles. i., and many other passages give opportunities enough for this. Special opportunity is afforded also in the New Year’s Eve festival [German—*Sylvesterabendfeier*.—Trans.], which has been from ancient times observed in the Roman Catholic Church as the memorial feast of Bishop Sylvester I., who died on that day in the year 335, but has of late been rightly more and more observed in the Evangelical Church. The above texts are almost all suitable for this festival.

On the other hand, the homiletic application of the *name Jesus*, which so perfectly expresses the nature of His person, and must not therefore be separated from His person or used as a kind of charm, is very profitable. The biblical expression “to do anything, begin anything in the name of God,” may be fully applied to the name of Jesus: the question may be asked how much unhealed, unblessed, has been carried over from the old year into the new, on which the Lord’s healing power might now manifest itself, etc. As the feast of the Name of Jesus, New Year’s Day has an independent importance, yet “it is not so absolute that a New Year’s sermon which did not specially deal with the name of Jesus would be detrimental to the festival, as that a preacher who at Easter said nothing about the resurrection would violate the Easter festival” (Palmer, 222).

No festival has passed through so many names, and therefore so many variations in its meaning, as the *Feast of the Epiphany*. Now it is the first miracle at Cana that is connected with it—“Bethpania”: now it is the miraculous feeding of the five thousand—“Phagiphania.” For the most part, however, the reference to the adoration of the Magi asserted itself in the West, and then the appearing of the star was also associated with the word Epiphany. A common basis for these various ideas is no doubt this: “The coming forth of Christ from the darkness of the holy

Christmas night into the light of publicity and the attestation of Him as Messiah, Anointed One, and King by the star, the presents, the baptism of the Spirit," etc. (Conrady). The significance of the day, of the appearance of the light, for the Gentiles as a missionary festival is the most natural and most beautiful. Onward to Christ and His salvation is not merely the movement of the Scriptures, with the growing light of their revelation, it is also the movement of heathen wisdom, with its seeking in the dark, under the sky of night, the movement of all history with its ruins, of nature with its sufferings, of the heart with its wounds, of all creation with its longing for freedom.

The wise men come to Jerusalem, but only reach Bethlehem through the word of the Prophet. The light of natural revelation leads, at furthest, into the neighbourhood of salvation, but needs to be supplemented by the holy Scriptures: the words of God must come as the key to His deeds and works. On the way to Bethlehem the light of the Word and of the star are blended.

In Rome religious addresses are delivered at the Feast of the Epiphany in a multitude of languages by men from many nations and lands, who are preparing themselves in the Propaganda for missionary work, in order to represent visibly and audibly the revelation of Christ among the Gentiles. The more important the work of missions becomes from day to day, the better will it be for the Protestant Church—which, as a Church, does not carry on this work, but leaves it to be looked after by individual societies—to recognise it officially by this festival at least.

*The Passion and Easter season*, the oldest of all, forms, as the memorial celebration of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, *i.e.* of the centre-point of our faith and hope, the *centre-point* of Christian festivals also. In proportion as the Scriptures, from the *πρῶτον εὐαγγέλιον* on, refer with growing definiteness, from different points of view, to this divine fact of salvation for the redemption and reconciliation of the world, and, after its occurrence, to the fountain of mercy and cleansing which is still open therein to the sinner, the more numerous are the texts and thoughts which present themselves to the homilist in connection with it.



*Good Friday*, [in German] *Karfreitag*, or silent Friday (not from *χάρις* or *carus*, but from the Old High-German *chara* = lament, Middle High-German *haren* = to lament, on account of the lamentation-hymn in the Church), *παρασκευή*, *ἡμέρα τῆς σωτηρίας* or *χάριτος*, is in the Christian Church of equal antiquity with the Easter festival, forming with it, from the fourth century for a considerable time, *one* indivisible celebration, and even sharing its name as *πάσχα σταυρώσιμον* and *ἀναστάσιμον*. In the Roman and Greek Churches it is less solemn, on account of the omission of the Mass, and even in the Protestant Church it has only in recent times been raised to the position of a festival of the first rank. It is, along with "Holy Thursday," the only memorial day of the Passion season which has a quite distinct significance as the day of our Lord's death, to which conclusion of the Passion commemoration the preaching, if not during the whole of Lent, at least in Passion week, should gradually lead. As pre-eminently a day of penitence and reconciliation, on which the sin of the world reached its climax, in order that thenceforth it might make way for an epoch of grace; a day on which the victory of the hostile world becomes its judgment and the outward defeat of Christ becomes the greatest triumph of divine love, of divine grace, mightier, over mighty sin; as a revelation of God's eternal thoughts of peace towards the world, even though here realised in deepest mystery—the history of this day, according to its *fundamental ideas*, affords the most abundant homiletic material. Such ideas are: the holy God, who, for His own majesty's sake, cannot cancel the guilt of the sinful world without judicial expiation; His compassion and love, in not executing this judgment on men, who would thus have to forfeit their eternal destiny: His wisdom, which finds a way for the satisfaction of the offended honour of God Himself, as well as for the deliverance of the guilty in the loving, voluntary self-sacrifice of the *only* guiltless One; the Lamb of God upon the altar, His death of substitution and satisfaction;

the weight and climax of His sufferings as punitive, or the horror of being forsaken by God; the fulfilment in this true paschal Lamb, this high-priest and sacrifice in one, of the Old Testament types, especially that of the servant of God; the cross as the place of the deepest humiliation, on which the King of the Jews hangs as King of Sorrows—but also as the world-redeeming and world-conquering symbol, because on it the world and sin are vanquished—as a sign-post with two arms, pointing to life and to death, as a pattern for the necessity of the crucifixion and death of the old man; the serpent and He who trod the serpent under foot, or the most fearful of all conflicts between light and darkness, affecting even external nature, and ending with the victory of a love which “is strong as death”; the blessed assurance of our reconciliation, the rending of the veil, the tearing in pieces of the handwriting which testified against us, and an abolition of the Levitical priesthood: the free access to God now opened, the “fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness” (Zech. xiii.).

If the fundamental idea of this festival generally is in itself so rich and so important that it must find an echo in every Christian sermon, the consideration in detail of the circumstances of this suffering and death is absolutely inexhaustible: the bearing of the cross; Simon the Cyrenian; the warning to the women, “What shall be done in the dry?” the disgrace of this mode of death, and the being numbered with the transgressors; especially the words spoken from the cross; the inscription on the cross; the conduct of the people, of the soldiers, of the mockers; the likeness and the difference between the two who were crucified with Him, and their fate; the women and the disciples at the cross; the thirst of the Dying One; the darkness; the rending of the veil; the earthquake and the beginning of the resurrection; the testimony of the centurion; the opening of the side without the breaking of a bone; the fulfilment of many special prophecies down to the burial itself.

As texts for Good Friday and for the Passion season generally we may recommend: Ps. xxii., xl. 13, 14: Isa. xliii. 24, 25, liii.; Zech. ix. 11, xii. 10, xiii. 1: also Lam. i. 12 ("see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow"): Song of Solomon viii. 6: the narrative of the Passion from the anointing at Bethany; Matt. xii. 38-42, xx. 28, xvi. 21-23 (the aversion to His sufferings); Luke xii. 49, 50, xviii. 31 ff.; John i. 29, xii. 24 ff., xiii. 1, xv. 13, xvii. 4; Acts ii. 22, 23, iii. 14, 15, 18, 19; Rom. iii. 25 (propitiation), v. 6 and 8, v. 10, 18, 19, vi. 2, 3, 10, 11, viii. 31, 32, 33, 34; 1 Cor. i. 18, 23, 24, 30, ii. 2, 7, 8, vi. 20, xi. 26, xv. 3, 4; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 19-21 ("be ye reconciled," etc.), viii. 9; Gal. i. 4, ii. 20, iii. 13 ("a curse for us"), vi. 14; Eph. i. 7, v. 2; Phil. ii. 7, 8; Col. i. 14, 21, 22; 1 Thess. v. 9, 10; 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6, vi. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 11; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19 ("redeemed not with gold, but with the blood of Christ"), ii. 21-24, iii. 18, iv. 19; 1 John i. 7 ("the blood of Christ cleanseth us"), ii. 2 (Christ is the propitiation), iii. 5, 16, iv. 10, 11, 19; Heb. ii. 9, 17, 18, iv. 14, 15, v. 9, vii. 26, 27, ix. 11, 12, 28, x. 26, 27, xii. 2, 3; Rev. i. 18, ii. 10, v. 12 ("the Lamb that hath been slain," etc.).

The *pericopæ* for the Passion season are in part very unsuitable, since they are "adapted to *Lent* rather than to the Passion period" (Nitzsch, S. 80); hence the narrative of the Passion is often preached through.

In self-absorption into the mystery of the death of Christ—in connection with which, however, we must not go so far as the audacious sentence of the old hymn: "*O felix culpa, quæ talem meruit habere redemptorem,*" for Golgotha alone shows most plainly how little our "culpa" can be called "felix," notwithstanding the gift of the Son which was bestowed on us on account of it—everything depends on putting in the foreground the element of substitution and satisfaction—which cannot, without forced artificiality, be interpreted away from the word *ἀντι* (see Matt. xx. 28: *λύτρον ἀντι πολλῶν*; cf. 1 Tim. ii. 6: *ἀντίλυτρον ἵπὲρ πάντων*),—and this too in its full breadth, embracing not merely the elect,

but the whole world, as it is clearly expressed from Isa. liii. onward. Otherwise it will never be possible to open up the wells of comfort which are contained in the story of this day, and to let the message go forth, "Be ye reconciled to God; for He hath made Him to be sin *for us*, who knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21). This is certainly a deep mystery; it may, however, be followed up scripturally, in accordance with the maxim, "without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22), to this point, that a *pure* life must be offered as an atonement to God, who, as righteous, *must* punish and yet, as merciful, willeth not the death of His creatures—that this was found in Christ *only*; that in this way alone our salvation, and at the same time the fulfilment of God's creative plan, was possible; but that also in the *voluntariness* with which Christ, on His part, undertook this sacrifice lies His infinite merit, the all-embracing meritoriousness of this act; and that in the real incarnation of Christ, in His actual entrance into the human race, the possibility of substitution was brought about. It must be difficult for any one who does not believe in a substitution to attain to a certainty of forgiveness even for himself alone, not to speak of showing others the right way to it. To this truth all who are really believers cling in the hour of death.

In this connection it is important for the biblical student to note the fact that the idea of substitution is not merely an Old Testament one in the Mosaic sacrificial ritual, but reaches back into primitive times and extends to mankind universally, emerging everywhere in the heathen sacrifices of beasts and men. The false delusion in the heathen sacrifice was this, that the gift as a *present* could make amends for sin, whereas the Old Testament sharply separates the elements of atonement and the offering on the altar; it is not the latter, but the blood, that is expiatory, and hence the touching or the sprinkling with blood always precedes the bringing to the altar. It is only in Christ that the two—expiation and offering—are united; He atones, bleeding on the altar. It is also noteworthy, that whereas the *idea of substitutionary atonement* gradually disappeared from the heathen animal sacrifice, it clung the more closely to the human sacrifice, and to the animal sacrifice so far as it took the place of the former. What an expression this is of the thought that the divine anger demands a great expiation, and that the noblest of all life, the human life, is needed for

this. All mankind carries in its heart the idea of the effective self-surrender of one for many. This fact in itself lifts us above the doubts of our reason as to how the self-sacrifice of an innocent person can make atonement for the guilty (Delitzsch, *Apol.*, S. 183).

The fundamental idea of Good Friday dominates also the season of *Lent* which precedes it, beginning with Ash Wednesday. Here it would be convenient for the preacher, in a longer or shorter course of sermons, beginning at the latest with Palm Sunday, to accompany our Lord on His path of suffering, and to commence it with an introductory summary (*e.g.* with John xiii. 1, "Having loved His own," etc.; xiv. 30, 31, "The Prince of this world cometh," etc.; or xi. 49 ff.; the counsel of Caiaphas; Luke xviii. 31, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem," etc.; or with passages from His farewell discourses and the like). The agony in Gethsemane—which reveals the Son of God in His deepest humiliation and severest conflict, the Father's cup in all its bitterness, but at the same time the complete greatness, voluntariness, and spotless holiness of the sacrifice undertaken by the Lord—forms the dark gate of the actual path of suffering, the *passio magna*. From that point onward, on the one hand, the Son of God is to be depicted in His *true grandeur*, growing with every new movement in the drama of suffering, in a glory increasing with every fresh step of His self-surrender (as free and a Deliverer even in the time of His arrest, Matt. xxvi. 53; John xviii. 6, 8, 9; as the justified One and Judge in the presence of His accusers and judges, and of the denying Peter, who regards Him as *ὁ κύριος*, Luke xxii. 61, the only time that this expression is used in the story of the Passion; as the Prince of His kingdom in presence of the representatives of the kingdom of this world; as King of truth in presence of a servant of doubt, as Priest, Prophet, and Saviour on the accursed tree, see Nitzsch, S. 80); and, on the other hand, the *sin of the world*, increasing with every step, is to be characterised in its unity and variety, how it co-operates, from the prince of

darkness to the disciples who betrayed, denied, and who fled, from all classes and sections of the people in all forms and degrees of wickedness (avarice and treachery, self-preservation and faint-heartedness, laziness and weakness, malice and cruelty, little faith and unbelief, mockery, self-hardening even to blaspheming the Holy Ghost), and converges, as if in a very microcosm of sin, in order to exhaust itself in its opposition to the testimony for the truth borne in speech and in silence, and to cause the Lamb of God to appear all the more plainly as the Only Righteous One; along with which the doctrinal, ethical, and comforting elements (*e.g.* with reference to John xiv. 30, 31; the Lord's Supper and the farewell discourses; the betrayer, the denier, etc.) are to be expanded for the unconverted and for believers, and especially for the suffering followers of the cross of Jesus.

Süsskind, *Passionsschule*, 2 Aufl. 1880 (who commends himself by the richness of his thought, following the story of the Passion word for word, and showing Christ in His sufferings as the key to the world's history); Nebe, *Die Leidensgeschichte nach den 4 Evangelien*, 1 Band, 1881.

In its full scope the period of Easter begins with the Sundays of Septuagesima, Sexagesima, etc., reckoned backwards from it. These, however, form rather a sort of transition period, until the forty days' fast begins with Ash-Wednesday. But, according to the *pericopae*, they are plainly assigned to the Passion season, and are therefore no doubt to be regarded as an integral part of that season, and this transition period is, as is well known, called in the Roman Catholic Church *Carnival* (*carovale?* or rather *carovale?*), the excesses of which are a very sad preparation for the Passion season, and give the saddest evidence of the incapacity of that Church for leading its people to a true, living imitation of the cross of Christ. The evangelical preacher must, if necessary, take a stand even in the pulpit against this festival of folly. Of what avail is it for the Roman Catholic priest on *Ash-Wednesday* to put ashes first on his own head, then on the clergy and those who assist in the service, and, finally, on all present, as a token of penitence, if before this, days and nights of excess, in which

a loose rein is given to the flesh, have again completely broken the moral strength for serious repentance ?

It is perhaps impossible as well as unnecessary to enumerate the inexhaustible homiletic elements of the story of the Passion. Infinitely rich material for homiletic treatment is afforded in the *anointing of Jesus at Bethany*, with which it usually commences; the love of Mary and its good reason; the scowl of darkness in the avaricious question of Judas; the inward preparation of Jesus Himself for His sufferings in the quiet circle of Bethany, to which He seems to have returned every night; then the *last meal with His disciples*, with its incomparable introduction, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15), which so deeply puts to shame those Christians who often show so little desire for it; the *washing of the feet* by the true *servus servorum Domini*, with its equally incomparable and beautiful introduction, "Having loved His own," etc. (John xiii. 1), especially the washing of Peter's feet—an object-lesson and a symbol; the difference between the chosen and the rejected ("I know whom I have chosen"); the departure of the betrayer from the circle of the disciples with the last warning which preceded it, his self-hardening and self-sealing for judgment with the sop ("after the sop Satan entered into him"), to depict departure from the Lord ("and it was night!") as fearful steps towards the abyss; the anticipatory dispensing of the whole fruit of His suffering and death and resurrection in the *Holy Supper* by Him who was already inwardly ready and dedicated to death; the opening and execution of the testament of the departing One, who kept for the last moment the most precious pledge of His love; the death of the Old Covenant, which hastens to its grave as the cup of the New Testament is raised (here this expression is used for the first time); the happy giving and receiving in the Supper; this last quiet feast of peace immediately before the breaking of the storm; the Supper as the most sacred thing of all in the New Covenant, etc. Then, especially, *Gethsemane*, the beginning of the actual Passion, the picture of deepest humiliation, which affects us almost more profoundly than the grandeur of Christ: and the disciples whom the Lord finds sleeping, He is quite alone, a token that now in the divine judgment all men are unclean, and that not one among them all is fit in his own nature to approach God or to be present at this event, much

less to take part in it (Rieger, *Passionspredigten*, S. 257). A cup which the whole world, man by man, fills with the bitterness of its sin,—held in the Father's hand, from which the Son had hitherto been accustomed to receive only good,—which He must drink by allowing new sins, the greatest sins, to be committed against Himself; and therefore the severest conflict in which no doubt the *fact* of the work of redemption remained clear to Him, but the *manner* of it was dark, because this cup was *so impure*, full of sin and death, and He had now to come into closest contact with these dark powers, for whose impurity He, as the Pure One, had such an infinitely tender feeling; and then this cup so *painful*, because full of the bitterness of punishment, and therefore dark *before* Him, *in* Him, and even *above* Him, inasmuch as here for the first time he recognises a Will which is different from His own. Then, however, not merely the dark side but also the bright side of this conflict: the Son of Man writhes, the Son of God conquers with the humble resignation of a child; what love to us, and yet how humbling for us that the bearing of our sins should call forth such tempests of the soul as manifested themselves in that bloody sweat; how humbling that there was no other way of deliverance to be found but this darkest and most painful one! How much grander the trembling and shrinking of Jesus than the defiant contempt of death shown by many heathen! Then the drama of the Passion, from the arrest onward, as *a little world full of sin*, in which all its kinds appear in all their forms, and hence a history of the world on a small scale, full of huge contrasts, full of endless delusions and self-delusions, the revelation of all tricks and faults of the human heart, from weakness and cowardice to the outbreak of Satanic passion (“Crucify him,” etc.), and hellish mockery; the different figures appearing as types of certain sins—*Peter*, of confidence in the flesh; *Judas*, of craftiness and hypocrisy, of the covetousness and then the remorse of the world; *the high priests*, of envious and hypocritical official pride; *Pilate*, of doubt, and the fear of man, and the haughty arrogance of the educated man of the world; *Herod*, of frivolous light-mindedness; *the people*, a picture of fickleness and unreasonable outcry, etc.; and all this in contrast with the true glory, grandeur, and growing vindication of the patient servant of God, who continues His work of healing to the end—the healing of Malchus:



the looking upon Peter as he denied Him: His testimony before the council, before Pilate, to the weeping women, His prayer for His executioners, His comfort for His mother, His promise to the thief, etc.

Then all particular sayings: "Whom seek ye?" "It is I." "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"—and so on to Golgotha;—the co-operation of the powers of darkness in friend and foe (Pilate and Herod's friends, etc), the rapid sequence of events, how evil produces its fruits as if in a storm—Judas has scarcely received the reward of his iniquity when despair drives him to his own place; the whole accelerated judicial procedure which in great haste wants to hurry the Lord to His death before the dawn of the feast, and then allows the body to be taken away as quickly as possible, these events thronging on one another stroke upon stroke, and more happening in a few hours than otherwise would happen in years, nay centuries, because here all time has reached its turning-point,—all this is so remarkable, so instructive, that year by year new standpoints may be obtained in this grandest of all dramas.

Löhe, *Sieben Vorträge über die Worte Christi am Kreuze*. 2 Aufl., Stuttgart, 1868 (to be recommended); Martensen, *Die Leidensgeschichte Jesu Christi*, 12 Predigten, Gotha, 1876.

The Passion week, *hebdomas sancta, muta*, or even *nigra* (in contrast with Easter week as *hebdomas alba*), or, on account of the victory of Christianity, the *ἑβδομὰς μεγάλη* (because in it, as Chrysostom says, inexpressibly great benefits were bestowed on us), which, from the fourth century down, formed, along with Easter week, an inseparable whole of fifteen holy days to Quasimodogeniti (hence Quasimodogeniti is also called *ἀντίπασχα*, or *octava passae*), during which the courts of justice were closed by law, begins with *Palm Sunday, dominica palmarum* or *florum*, the original reference of which to Christ's entry into Jerusalem—whence the name—took a secondary place to its importance as the entrance to the sanctity of Passion week. A text which prepares the way for the celebration of Good Friday may the rather be chosen from the story of the Passion, since the "gospel" Matt. xxi. has been already assigned to

the First Sunday in Advent. The Thursday before Easter ["Green Thursday" in German], *dies viridium*, the day of the green, *i.e.* of the *sinless*, namely, of those who have publicly repented, who, after the penitence of Lent, were on this day absolved from their ecclesiastical penalties, and hence as *sinless persons* were admitted again into the fellowship of the Lord's Supper, and were therefore green, *i.e.* free from sin, Luke xxiii. 31 (hence also Day of *Remission* = day of remission of Church penalties—*viridis* in the Church Latin of the Middle Ages often = *sinless*), the Protestant Corpus Christi, has historically the commemoration of the founding of the holy Supper as the principal import of its observance, which, however, need not prevent our using as the basis of the sermon later elements in the chronological order of the story of the Passion.

In the *Easter sermon* (Easter, German *Ostern*, not perhaps by metathesis of letters from the Middle High-German *urstenli* = "to rise," but certainly connected with *Ostan*, *Osten*, day of rising, of resurrection, a translation of *ἀναστάσιμος*, and therefore perhaps also with *Ostara*, Anglo-Saxon *Eostra*, goddess of the new light of spring; plural [in German] because several holy days), on this festival regarded by the ancient Church as the *corona et caput omnium festivitatum*,—the liturgical fruit of which is the Christian observance of Sunday already existing in Apostolic times,—it is in our day more desirable than ever to put in a clear light, above all else, *the fact* of the bodily resurrection of Jesus, which is more surely attested than most facts of ancient history, as well as its *significance in the history of salvation*, now so often weakened but infinitely important,—and in this victory of all victories the proof that Christ is the Son of God (Rom. i. 4) who had the life in Himself, and therefore had power to lay it down and to take it again (John v. 26, ii. 19, x. 17 ff.); the confirmation of the truth of His most important statements about Himself: the splendid justification of the faith of the disciples in Him; the proof that His death was one

endured not for Himself, the sinless One, but for us, and was therefore to be removed again, *i.e.* that it was an atoning death, His sacrifice accepted by the Father and therefore truly efficacious: in short, the seal of the completion of the work of redemption (Rom. iv. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 17; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13), and therefore the foundation of all Christian hope of a future meeting in glory, of the complete fulfilment of this work of redemption in us the members related to our Head who has preceded us into life; the pledge of our resurrection and the abolition in believers also of the whole state of sin and death; and to celebrate gratefully at the same time the defeat of the last enemy (Rom. vi. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 52). Along with this we must also point out the *necessity* of this event for the whole process of salvation, which would be incomplete if it did not extend to the physical world also: and the deep connection of the resurrection of Christ with the renewal and perfecting of the whole world (Rom. viii. 21, 23; Phil. iii. 21; 2 Cor. iv. 10, etc.); but the *ethical consequences* which result for the Christian are to be especially emphasised—the walk in newness of life, brought about by the resurrection—forces which flow forth from Christ and work for renewal and sanctification (Rom. v. 10; Eph. ii. 5, 6; 1 Pet. i. 3).

This placing of the great facts of salvation, with their full historical setting as attested by Scripture, in the complete process of redemption, this conception of the particular events as necessary and indispensable to the whole of Christian faith and hope,—this is the great advance which recent believing biblical theology has made beyond Schleiermacher, who regards all the great festivals merely as symbolical representations of what must happen *in us*.

To observe Easter not with the leaven of modern unbelief and its vague phrases, but with “the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth,” the preacher requires a believing absorption in the *actuality*, the *significance*, and the connection of the resurrection in relation to the whole

process of salvation. The proof of its reality we must leave to Apologetic and Exegesis. But with regard to the importance of the *resurrection of the body*, which many nowadays set aside, saying that the rising of the body from the grave is not of so much consequence if only the Spirit of Christ works vitally in His people, the one statement of Paul is sufficient to overthrow such phrases:—“*If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . Ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished!*” (1 Cor. xv. 14–18). In view of this chapter, all attempts in general to deny the importance of the bodily resurrection, or to explain away the bodily resurrection in a spiritual continuance of life, are absurd! *More plainly than Paul attests the importance and physical character of the resurrection, it is impossible to speak.*

These unbelievers lack any deep *comprehensive view of the process of redemption*, by which God, according to the Scriptures, is leading the world towards its consummation, a process which must extend to the physical world if God's victory over all the forces of sin and death is not to remain incomplete. Even the earthly body is destined, when thoroughly penetrated by the Spirit, to be fashioned and *glorified* for perfect freedom and purity in connection with the children of God. And this process of the world's regeneration could only begin by the resurrection and glorification of the One Body, over which death in itself had no power, the sinless body of Christ, the second Adam, in whom all shall be made alive (1 Cor. xv. 22 ff.). How the new life thus introduced is, by means of the divine vital forces proceeding from it, to extend systematically farther and farther, and to vanquish more and more completely the power of death, at first invisibly in believers by the Spirit of sanctification, but then visibly in the resurrection, first of the just and then of all men, then in the earth and its renewal, down to the fulfilment of the words, “Behold, I make *all things new*” (Rev. xxi. 5), see my work on the *Critical Theory of Primitive Christianity and the Subject of the Resurrection*, S. 66 ff., Basel, 1868 (cf. also *Moderne Zweifel*, 2 Aufl. S. 517 ff.<sup>1</sup>).

In short, the divine - human birth, perfect sinless

<sup>1</sup> Or the English translation, *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief* (T. & T. Clark), pp. 451, 452, etc. [Trans.]

obedience, world-reconciling sufferings and death, death-conquering resurrection, exaltation to the right hand of the Father and sending of the Holy Spirit, are firmly connected elements of one and the same work of salvation. One link out of the chain and all the rest falls asunder! The resurrection, however, as the beginning of the glorification, is the important, indispensable link which connects the earthly temporal part of this work with the heavenly and eternal.

Let us therefore not limit ourselves in our preaching, in view of the modern denial of the resurrection, to defensive apologetic reasons, where these are necessary, but let us confidently take our stand on *the positive counter-proof of the necessity of the resurrection* as supported by reasons which follow from the nature of Christ's sinless *Person*, to which the Father had given to have life in itself—from the *omnipotence and righteousness of the divine government*, which would have annihilated itself if it had left in the grave the Holy One of God, in whose death sin and the power of hell had celebrated their greatest triumph—from *the work of Christ*, the crown of which is lacking if His death is not attested by the resurrection as a sacrificial death and the last enemy overcome—from the *presence of the Holy Spirit*, whom Christ sends and communicates in consequence of his resurrection and ascension (John xv. 26, xx. 22; Acts ii. 33)—from the *personal experience of believers*, who continually feel and enjoy in the Holy Spirit the sanctifying power of Christ's resurrection-life (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12 ff., iii. 1 ff.; 1 Pet. i. 3), because their Lord is not merely the Risen One, but also the Resurrection and the Life (John xi. 25). Similar reasons follow from the *connection of the whole history of salvation and the kingdom*, because with the resurrection of Christ begins the second, spiritual period of humanity, which will reach its perfect consummation at the end of the world; and therefore also *from the standpoint of the perfected world*, of which the resurrection and glorification of Christ are the symbol and pledge.

It is not, however, merely these general doctrinal-ethical fundamental ideas of the Easter festival, but *also the particular details* of the narratives of the resurrection—no doubt imperfect and often inexact, yet not contradicting

one another in essential points, but rather supplementary of each other, so delicious in their freshness and reflecting so perceptibly the glad alarm of the women and the disciples, together with the different appearances of the Lord in the rich fulness of their separate features—which yield the most varied and welcome material for the preacher's use. Thus the change of the human and angelic guardians of the sepulchre, the broken seals, the approach of the women, their sowing in tears in the captivity of sorrow and despair and their reaping in joy in the liberty of the new Easter faith, the wisdom of holy education in the choice of place, time, and persons in connection with the different appearances of the Risen One, His words of kindly comfort from the Easter question, "Why weepest thou?" and the Easter greeting, "Peace be unto you!" to the words of solemn warning addressed to the disciples on the way to Emmaus and to Thomas; the much freer, more unrestrained, and, at the same time, closer union of the Glorified One with His followers, since He can now for the first time bestow Himself upon them, and become incarnate in them as the Spirit and Life; the new life from the Prince of Life growing in His people, from the message, not yet believed, "He is risen!" to the triumph-song of faith, "O death, where is thy sting?"—the almost inaccessible majesty, and yet so condescending kindness of the Lord, the restoration to His apostleship of the fallen Peter with overflowing love; the mysterious nature of the resurrection body existing in spiritual form, and therefore under other laws, so far as the Scripture gives indications on the subject, etc.

As texts, outside the "gospels," may be recommended: Job. xix. 25–27; Ps. xvi. 10, cxviii. 15, 16, 24, 25 ("The voice of rejoicing and salvation," etc.), cxxvi. ("He that goeth forth and weepeth—shall come again with rejoicing," etc.); Isa. liii. 8; Ezek. xxxvii.; Dan. xii. 2, 3; Hos. xiii. 14; John ii. 19 ("Destroy this temple," etc.), v. 25, x. 18, xi. 25, 26 ("I am the Resurrection and the

Life," etc.), xiv. 19 ("because I live, ye shall live also"), xvii. 24; Acts ii. 22-24, 36, iii. 15 ("the Prince of Life"), v. 20 ("speak in the temple all the words of this Life"), 30, 31, x. 34-41, xxiv. 15; Rom. i. 4, iv. 25, v. 1, 10, vi. 4 ("like as Christ was raised from the dead, . . . so we also might walk in newness of life"), viii. 31-34, x. 9, xiv. 8, 9; 1 Cor. vi. 14, xvi. in all its sections: 2 Cor. iv. 14, v. 1, 2, 15; Phil. ii. 9-11; Col. iii. 2; 1 Thess. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 10 ("who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light"), ii. 8; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4 ("begat us again unto a living hope," etc.): 1 John iii. 2; Heb. xii. 2, xiii. 20, 21 ("who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep"); Rev. i. 17, 18, ii. 8-10, xx. 4-15.

Sehenkel (as well as others) asks, "Why Christ, if He returned in earthly bodily form, *i.e.* glorified, did not show Himself to His Jewish judges, or even to the Roman procurator? Why did He not appear on the streets of Jerusalem before all the people?" (*Charakterbild Jesu*, S. 233). This question gives evidence of a remarkable shortsightedness. That Christ did not do this, that He appeared "*not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before God*" (Acts x. 40, 41), does not lessen but increases, for every thinking person, the credibility of His reappearance. In the same way it might also be asked, Why did He not, to prove that He was the Son of God, descend from the cross? They demanded it indeed of Him. Just as Christ always had to refuse "signs from heaven," spectacular displays, so it would certainly have been inconsistent with the character of all His miracles, and particularly with the moral mission of Jesus Himself, if He had shown Himself publicly as a spectacle to His enemies. Miracles may make faith easy, but do not by any means compel it. No; from that time on, "*those who believe*" are to be "saved by the foolishness of preaching," and Israel and the whole world, with all their wise men and scribes, had to learn from fishermen, poor, indeed, but singled out by these appearances for high honour (*Moderne Zweifel*, S. 528 ff.<sup>1</sup>). But since the time of the

<sup>1</sup> Or the English translation, *Modern Doubt*, etc. (T. & T. Clark), pp. 460 ff. [Trans.]

*Wolfenbüttel Fragments*, the greatest offence has been taken at the nature of the resurrection body. "A body," says Strauss, "which can be felt cannot pass through closed doors, and, *vice versa*, a body which without hindrance passes through boards cannot have bones, nor a stomach to digest bread and boiled fish." It is often an offence even for Christians; it is therefore well if the preacher on Easter Sunday or Easter Monday, as he has opportunity, remove such difficulties. These wonderful qualities surely speak much more *for* than against the reality of the resurrection. For how should only *one* evangelist, not to speak of all together, have hit upon a description to all appearance so contradictory and utterly unheard of, unless it necessarily followed from the nature of the case? Would not an invented story betray itself too glaringly in this matter? *The good conscience of the narrators* as to the fact of the resurrection is therefore here *precisely shown*. Like every primal generation, the nature of the resurrection body of Him who was "the First-fruits of them that slept" must remain *a mystery*. We cannot in this life form any clear conception of the process of change into a glorified body; we can only remind ourselves that heavy water is changed into light vapour, or dark flint into transparent glass, or that the caterpillar which crawls laboriously along can be transformed into an airy butterfly. The glorified body of Christ was in its fundamental components still the same body, with the marks of its wounds, but in a new *spiritual form of being* and therefore existing under other laws, which no physicist has yet measured. It is only at the ascension that the glorification, begun at the resurrection, is completed. Until then the body of Christ appears as an elementary, material body: but its elements are no longer bound by space, and it can go here or there, make itself visible or invisible, and shape itself outwardly according to the internal will. Why? Because it is *spiritualised through and through*, it has become *the thorough expression of the Spirit and its perfectly willing instrument*. Whoever, in view of the constant conflict between flesh and spirit, learned rightly to long for a harmonious existence, in which this strife would be ended, the body being the willing servant of the spirit and at the same time its immaculate expression, should feel revived by the blessed hope of the future glorification. This is the exalted and glorious kernel of this part of the biblical story



of salvation. In this resurrection body the Lord stands during those forty days, as it were, on the boundary line of both worlds, and bears the impress of this life as well as of the future state. This body, therefore, also could sometimes exercise the power of resistance (when touched), sometimes not (when penetrating through doors), according to the will of the spirit. External doors could interpose no barriers to that which exists in a *spiritual* form of life. Just as an angel can open the prison door for Peter, so Christ can open a closed door and get an entrance to His disciples. It is not necessary to assume that He passed through the door without its being opened. Otherwise the Lord could have also gone through the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre, which was rolled away by an angel. That He is still capable of eating food, though not needing it, has its analogy in appearances of angels. He does not indeed "digest" this food, as Strauss with materialistic coarseness expresses it, but He assimilates it in some way or other, and transmutes it into His spiritual form of existence; and hence it cannot form a hindrance to His disappearing. For it is not the earthly body *in itself* which is incapable of being developed into a spiritual state of existence, but only the *defilement* which cleaves to it in our fallen condition, which draws it down with leaden weight and attaches it to matter. The terrestrial body in itself *is destined to be spiritualised*; but if this is its destiny, it must also possess the capability. This is the true reason why the sinless body of Christ could be immediately transmuted. *Its purity was also the possibility of its transformation* (cf. *Moderne Zweifel*, 2 Aufl. S. 545 ff.<sup>1</sup>).

To try to give to *Easter Monday*, and analogously to *Whit Monday*, another meaning than the view that the importance of the commemorated fact and its celebration should dominate and hallow also the following period, that the richness of the festival thought cannot be completely unfolded in *one* service, and therefore requires further services—to try to give to them, besides this general idea, a further and particular one, is artificial. Liebner says that on Easter Sunday we are to preach, "The Lord liveth," and on Easter Monday, "Does He live in us?" But why should we not ask this on Easter Sunday also? Osiander says that on the first day we should show the exalted

<sup>1</sup> Or *Modern Doubt*, etc., pp. 476 ff. [Trans.]

glorious side of the Easter story, and on the second its tender and comforting side: but the comfort should not be lacking even on the chief day of the feast. Palmer says that on the Sunday the dominating idea is not the special import of the text, but the general thought of the feast; and that on the second day, on the other hand, the texts are to be homiletically treated more in accordance with their own individual aspects. There is more truth in this. First the general, and then the particular. But the preacher must not therefore allow his liberty of entering on particular aspects of the narrative, even on the Sunday, to be in the least restricted.

The concluding period is that of *Whitsuntide*, preceded by *Ascension Day*, ἑορτὴ ἀναλήψεως, ἐπισωζομένη, which, as the completion of the transmutation begun in the resurrection, is regarded by many as the close of the Easter season, since in this festival of Christ's ascension of the throne His kingly office is celebrated, as His priestly office is in the Easter season. But the Feast of the Ascension, as the preparation for the coming outpouring of the Spirit (John vii. 39, xvi. 7), and as the beginning of Christ's reign in the world, is more closely related to the period of Whitsuntide. The central thought in the idea of this feast is the *perfecting* of Jesus, which is to be regarded partly, on its *negative* side, in the loosing of the last bonds of the earthly form of a man and of a servant, the departure from His disciples and the world generally (John xvi. 28), and also the non-fulfilment of His disciples' expectations of an earthly Messiahship (Acts i. 6); partly, on its *positive side*, the entrance into glory, the sitting down at the right hand of the Father, and therefore taking upon Him the rule of the world, the heavenly crowning with glory and honour, the exaltation above all angels, His appointment as Lord over all heavenly things from which He now bestows gifts upon men (Eph. iv. 8 ff.); and therefore also on the *practical soteriological* side: the dawn of the reign of grace of His kingdom, the beginning of His heavenly priesthood, the gathering of a

peculiar people by all requisite calling and endowment, the members following their Head who has preceded them, the comfort of the permanent connection with Him who is ever near, the carrying out of His last, world-embracing, parting commands, the waiting for His promises and His future appearance, *sursum corda* for mind and conduct, the grateful gazing after Him from the redeemed world which is being left, the look upwards to the Father's heavenly home, where the Forerunner is preparing a place for us, the believing hope of being perfected and exalted with Him, of the spiritual and future world, for the pilgrims of God, who while in the world are not of it, and seek those things which are above. All this—with the different elements in the last discourses of the Lord and His ascension itself, its quiet character (in contrast with the whirlwind at the ascension of Elijah), its aspect of priesthood, of blessing, but also of kingliness; with the appearance of the angels and the joyful return of the disciples—affords material enough for festival devotion and gladness.

Besides the *pericopae* the following texts may be used: Ps. xvi. 11, xlvii. 6–8, cx. (sitting at the right hand, etc.); also ii. 8, etc., lxxviii. 19, cxlix. 2, lxxii., ciii. and other Psalms of praise; Is. ix. 7, lii. 7; Dan. vii. 13, 14, 27; Prov. x. 28 (“The hope of the righteous shall be gladness,” Exaudi<sup>1</sup>); Matt. vi. 20, 21, xxvii. 20; Luke xxiv. 50–53; John iii. 13, 35, xii. 32 (“I, if I be lifted up,” etc.), xiv. 2, 3 (“many mansions,” etc.), 6 (“I am the way”), 20, xvii. 5 and 24, xviii. 36, 37 (kingdom not of this world), xx. 17; Acts x. 42; Rom. viii. 33, 34; 1 Cor. xv. 24–28; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, v. 16 and 6; Eph. i. 20, 23, ii. 6, iv. 8–10; Phil. ii. 9–11, iii. 14, 20–21 (“our conversation is in heaven,” etc.); Col. iii. 1, 2, or to verse 10, also especially 4; 1 Pet. i. 21, iii. 22; Heb. i. 3–13, ii. 9, iv. 14–16 (the high priest who has passed into the heavens),

<sup>1</sup> See Ps. xxvii. 7. [Trans.]

vi. 19, 20, vii. 25, viii. 1, 2, ix. 24, x. 19, etc., xii. 1, 2, xiii. 14; Rev. vii. 10, xii. 10, etc.

The question whether *Ascension Day* belongs to the middle period or to the last is still an open one. The resurrection is certainly the beginning of the ascension, according to John xx. 17 ("Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father. . . . I ascend unto My Father," etc.), and the ascension is therefore the conclusion of the resurrection. It is decisive, however, that in *the majority of passages* the ascension is put in connection with the sending of the Spirit, as the preparation for it and necessary condition of it: "The Holy Ghost was not yet come, because Jesus was not yet glorified,"—"It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you," etc. Moreover, the thought of the heavenly reign of Christ, which is surely an essential element in the festal idea of the third period, would be interrupted if the ascension, the beginning of that reign, were separated from it and reckoned in the second period whose acts of salvation have their scene upon earth. Besides, even in the ancient Church the ten days from Ascension to Whit-Sunday were regarded as a preliminary festival to Whitsuntide.

The elements of the festal idea are clear. The centre is the *perfecting of Jesus*. The meaning of this, both for His own person, and particularly for His followers who remain behind, is to be shown. It is especially appropriate in connection with His departure to glance back at His coming. In what circumstances He entered the world, and how does He leave it! Hence the duty of thanksgiving. The special circumstances of His departure are also very significant, "While *He blessed* them, He parted from them" (Luke xxiv. 51); what a beautiful Amen to His activity on earth! The continuation of this is the blessing which is now constantly descending from His kingly throne, and His heavenly intercession. It would also be appropriate to draw parallels with the ascension of Elijah. For this hero of spiritual warfare, this fiery spirit who "broke forth like a fire and whose word burned like a touch, a fiery chariot had to be the sign of his triumphal entrance into heaven, and a whirlwind was the true and fitting conclusion of his stormy, tempestuous life." How much more gentle, more priestly, Christ's departure in blessing! There is a contrast

like that between the thunders of Sinai and the gentle murmur of the divine words of life in the Sermon on the Mount. Another contrast is also noteworthy: Elijah requires a vehicle, Christ rises in His own independent force. Elijah disappears with the still uncertain promise, that his spirit would come upon his successor Elisha; Christ with the definite promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all His followers.

Particularly rich also are the *springs of comfort* which flow from a believing meditation on the ascension: "I am with you always": yes, now for the first time He is to be rightly understood by us (John xx. 17): how comforting to know that the reins of government are placed *in His hand*—we do not wish them in any other, for He is indeed our best Friend: how inspiring to know that a Man, a Son of Man, sits at the right hand of God! How comforting to know that He has *such great* and ever-enduring power, yes, all power in heaven and on earth!—therefore God is for us, and who can be against us? How pleasant is the thought that He is above to prepare a place for us! and most comforting of all, He is above as our Mediator and Intercessor, as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

The practical, hortatory elements are also obviously connected with this: He is gone before, therefore follow Him! Let your conversation be in heaven: seek those things that are above, etc. The ascension is a question to our heart: Where is your treasure, in heaven or on earth? Art thou lying at His feet, or art thou going to wait until He makes thee, as one of His enemies, His footstool? Are you allowing yourself to be drawn forward and upward? And then also the exhortation to be joyful on account of this Ruler: "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King" (Ps. cxlix. 2).

*Whitsuntide*, *πεντηκοστή*, is originally a collective idea for the time from Easter to Whit-Sunday, and since the middle of the second century was made a festival season, although the Old Testament Pentecost may very likely have given it from the beginning a special sacredness, since this feast of harvest was transmuted into the subject of the Christian Whitsuntide observance, just as the Old Testament Passover was changed to Good Friday. Whitsuntide

is the last principal feast commemorating a prominent fact of salvation which our time—so much in want of a larger measure of the Spirit for pastors and people—very specially needs. As the commemoration of the *outpouring of the Spirit* upon the disciples; as the foundation-day of the *Christian Church*, into which the company of disciples has now expanded, and which shows its œcumenical mission at its very beginning; as the conclusion of the divine revelation in the sending of the *ἄλλος παράκλητος*, through which the connection of the Father and Son with the Church on earth is completed, and in which there is contained for us the pledge of perfect fellowship with God and Christ, of the inexhaustible influence of Christ with all His saving powers upon the human race, and therefore also the guarantee of the imperishable perfectibility of the Church: this festival also presents to the homilist, in addition to its historical and doctrinal features, a fulness of *ethical* reflections. Such are the difference of the merely *churchly* and the truly *spiritual* standing and conduct; the necessity of the new birth even for baptized persons; the access into the most intimate fellowship with God, *i.e.* into the knowledge and experience of God as the Spirit, who, the more deeply He communicates Himself to us, relaxes the less His inviolable majesty, and hence is called holy, especially as *the Spirit*; the holy way to this fellowship with God, repentance; the gracious thirst persevering in prayer, the believing desire: the necessity for verifying and availing ourselves of the spiritual gifts we have received, by undaunted testimony, spiritual works, holy walk, etc. Moreover, the *particular circumstances*—the waiting in faith for the promise of the Father: the silence of the disciples until the Spirit opened their mouths: the blessing of united prayer: the overwhelming fulness with which the stream of the Spirit flows forth; the glimpse into the divine fulness of light and power which is thus opened up to us; the attention first of pious men to this divine event (Acts ii. 5: “Devout men from every nation”), at the birth

of the Church as at the birth of Christ: the full glory of the Spirit as the true representative of Christ on earth, in the variety of His operations; the rapid maturing of the disciples by the Spirit into mighty and fearless witnesses; the one Spirit and the divided tongues; the gift of speech for the different nationalities, an encouragement for missionary work; the different attitude of the people towards the new preaching with the Spirit; its rich result, which makes Whitsuntide the first harvest festival of the Lord; the peculiar way in which the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in our hearts, etc.—suggest the most varied practical application.

As texts there may also be used: Ps. xxxvi. 8–10 (“They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house,” etc.), li. 10–12 (“Create in me . . . a right spirit”), lxxv. 9 (“the river of God, which is full of water”), lxxviii. 9 (“Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance, when it was weary”), cxliii. 6, 10 (“My soul thirsteth after Thee, as a thirsty land”); Isa. xli. 17, xliii. 19, 20, lix. 19 (“He shall come like a stream that has been stayed, which the wind of the Lord drives”<sup>1</sup>); Ez. xxxvi. 26, 27 (the new heart); Joel iii. 1, 2; Zeph. iii. 9, 10 (“then will I preach differently to the peoples with friendly lips”<sup>1</sup>); also Zeel. iv. (the vision of the two olive trees), xii. 10 (“I will pour out the spirit of grace and of supplication,” etc.); Mark xvi. 20; Luke i. 53 (“He hath filled the hungry with good things,” etc.), xi. 13 (“If ye know how to give good gifts unto your children”); John xiv. 16–18, 26 (the Comforter), xvi. 13, xvii. 17; Acts i. 5, ii. 38, 39, iv. 31 (the connection of prayer with the sending of the Spirit), viii. 15–17 (baptized and not anointed), x. 34–44, xix. 1–6; Rom. i. 16 (for the Whit-Sunday sermon), v. 5, viii. 9 (“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His”), 14–16, 26, xiv. 17; 1 Cor. ii. 10, iii. 16, vi. 11, 19, 20, xii. 3, 4 (“diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit”),

<sup>1</sup> Luther's version. [Trans.]

11-13; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Gal. iv. 6, v. 22; Eph. i. 14, 17-19, iv. 30 ("grieve not the Holy Spirit," etc.); 1 Tim. ii. 4 ("who will have all men to be saved"—the missionary aspect of Whitsuntide); 1 Pet. i. 22, 23; 1 John ii. 20, iv. 13, v. 2-6; Heb. ii. 3, 4, xii. 14; James i. 18; Rev. iv. 5, xxii. 1 ff.

The name *Pfingsten* [German for Whitsuntide] is more arithmetical than significant. "*Pfingsten*" is, like *Weihnachten* and *Ostern* [the German words for Christmas and Easter], originally a dative plural (Old High-German, *fim chustin*), which became in the Middle Ages a singular, *diu pfingsten*. There is no doubt about the derivation of  $\piεντηκοστή$ . The connection with the  $הַגִּבּוֹרִים הַגִּבּוֹרִים$ , or feast of Weeks, is very appropriate: the reception of the first-fruits of the Spirit, the nourishing of the soul by the bread of the Word, the ingathering of the first sheaves into the Church of Christ. At a later time the Jewish Pentecost also became a commemoration of the giving of the law on Sinai, which took place on the fiftieth day after the exodus from Egypt. This also presented points of contact with the idea of the New Testament festival. As the birthday of the Church with its new spiritual law of liberty, Whitsuntide is also "the festival of the gospel legislation" (Nitzsch).

It is *the special task of the Whitsuntide preacher of to-day* to awaken in our usually self-satisfied, culture-proud congregations more hunger and thirst after this most precious of all gifts, to get them to feel their poverty, that they may be enriched from above, and to indicate very emphatically the difference between mere *Church connection* and being *truly filled with the Spirit*. Are they Christians, as their name signifies—*anointed ones*? In many cases they do not know any longer what that unction is, they do not know whether they have the Spirit or not, know nothing of the fact that this Spirit is very different from our own consciousness ("the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits"), and that we must therefore perceive His voice in us, and be led by Him as children of God. This is the work of recalling our modern congregation to reflection, so that it may be aware of its lack of the Spirit and may learn again to sigh "My soul thirsteth for Thee," etc.

And this is the more necessary when unbelief is now



doing all in its power to *obliterate completely* the last remnants of a *recognition of this difference between the human mind and the Holy Spirit of God*, by the mischievous and erroneous doctrine that the Holy Spirit is identical with the spirit of the Church, *i.e.* not with the spirit of humbly pious, regenerate, consecrated Christians, but with the mind of the Church *talis qualis*, and therefore to a large extent with the modern Zeitgeist. According to this view, therefore, every baptized, confirmed, educated, and half-educated person is *eo ipso* also a believing converted Christian, who may, without anything further, take his part in deliberation and action on all Church questions. This error is the more dangerous as the natural man hears it gladly, because it always vexes him if the true believer, through the Spirit bestowed on him, has any advantage over the world. The world does not like this, and therefore it must have all or nothing! The Whitsuntide preacher therefore may, and must, oppose in a convincing way from the history of the event the erroneous conception of our time; for, according to Acts ii., the Spirit comes *from above, direct from the Lord* who as the Risen One breathes upon His disciples; it does not arise of itself in the disciples, as perhaps a spirit of their fellowship, and moreover it does not descend *upon all*, but on the praying, believing company of disciples—well-prepared by the three years' work of Christ, and especially by faith in His death and resurrection—who had already received the earnest of the Spirit after the resurrection (John xx. 22: "He breathed on them," etc.); finally, this Spirit *does not even come in accordance with the sentiment of that time*, for many are angry and mock the apostles as if they were drunk, and the words, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, . . . ye have crucified and slain," were surely not, for the Jewish mind of that time, very agreeable to hear. The Holy Ghost comes therefore not in harmony with, but in the sharpest, and to the natural man most painful, *opposition to the natural Zeitgeist of that time and of every time in Judaism, as well as in ancient and modern heathenism!*

The *gift of tongues* is also important, even though very mysterious: it is like a temporary removal of the judgment of the confusion of tongues: by the Holy Spirit that which has been sundered by sin is to be united, even the different nationalities are to be gathered and blended together in one

spiritual flock; "they prefigure the whole sanctified humanity of the future, in which all nations and tongues and languages shall in the Holy Spirit praise God and His Anointed."

This "speaking with other tongues" is to be distinguished from the *γλώσσαις λαλεῖν* (1 Cor. xiv.). The latter was a speaking, praying, praising with a suspended intelligent consciousness, in which the person affected, possessed by the Spirit, raised to an exalted, ecstatic state, abstracted from the outside world, and addressing God alone, burst forth in the impulse of overflowing devotion into new sounds and forms of speech formed directly by the *πνεῦμα*, only capable of expression in the Spirit-filled state, incomprehensible, exalted, or terrible to the ordinary mind (cf. the "unspeakable words," 2 Cor. xii. 4, in the case of Paul in the ecstasy), and requiring an explanation before they could be of service in edifying the people: differing therefore from Pentecost, when the different nationalities understood the speech at once. The gift of languages also indicates the missionary calling of the Church, and was necessary to arouse the people for the then-beginning age of preaching.

Further, the *indispensableness* and the whole *fulness of power and blessing* of the Holy Spirit, manifesting itself so gloriously in various ways, should also be pointed out. Without Him there would perhaps be no authentic New Testament, at least not one which would show us so truly and so clearly the way to life. What would have become of the Church without the Spirit who leads into all truth? What would become of the Church now, in opposition to powerful errors, old and new, without the Holy Spirit, through whose illumination new weapons for the conflict against error can always be produced from the Word of God? Then let us show the *rich fulness of this Spirit*, and explain how it is the Holy Spirit that first makes complete Christians, complete men, true hearers, sufferers, praying and conquering men. What would the poor Galilean fisherman have accomplished without the Holy Spirit?—a work that lasts even to our own day. But it should also be shown how the Holy Spirit *takes up His abode in the heart*; all that must have preceded this in the case of the disciples—how their hearts must have been gradually prepared and quite emptied of self (Peter and Thomas), firmly grounded in faith on the Risen One; and also how

much more ready God is to give than we are to ask. Finally, also it must be noticed, *why is it that God is called Holy as the Spirit in particular?* It is as Spirit that He communicates Himself most to men, bestows Himself most fully upon them; if it is especially in this form of existence and communication that He is called holy, it is thereby indicated that however deeply and intimately He may condescend to men, He cannot relax anything of His inviolable majesty. It is just as dwelling in us that He wants to show Himself specially as holy. Hence the sanctifying, purifying power of the Spirit in us! Hence, too, this suggests how this Guest is to be received, how to be kept, and how to be availed of. All kinds of ethical consequences and exhortations may be deduced from this too little noticed doctrinal event.

On *Whit-Monday* the question of *the personality of the Holy Spirit* might occasionally be treated in an apologetic aspect. I may refer, in this connection, to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in my *Moderne Zweifel* (2 Aufl. S. 276-281<sup>1</sup>), in the section on the Christian Trinitarian Conception of God. A few points may however be recalled which are not usually brought out in Dogmatics and Apologetics with full clearness.

As in the natural world the Spirit is the creative quickening energy which imparts to primal matter life and power of development (Gen. i. 2, the Spirit moving upon the waters), so in men the Spirit is the divine animating principle (Gen. ii. 7), the power which forms the personality, and thus on the ground of revelation the personally reviving divine force, the principle of production and renewal from above, through which the believer becomes in the moral sphere a child of God as he at first became, on the ground of nature, a personality. *All operations of the Spirit of God in man* are strengthening, purifying, perfecting, and glorifying the personal life and consciousness. It is only by the unction from above that a personality which has character and permanence of character is brought to perfection. Is it not therefore likely that there must be something of personality, of individuality in the Spirit itself which everywhere produces a complete, true, God-like personality? The source of the formation of spiritual character must surely Himself have personal qualities!

<sup>1</sup>Or *Modern Doubt*, etc. (T. & T. Clark), pp. 251-254. [Trans.]

Further, the passages should be pointed out in which self-consciousness, knowledge, feeling, will, self-determination, independent speech and action, *i.e. all the qualities which constitute a personality*, are very frequently assigned to the Spirit—nay, in which He is mentioned exactly as *He*, as a Person, *e.g.*, the masculine *ἐξελθὼς* (John xvi. 8, 13, 14); He searches all things, comforts, teaches, brings to remembrance, declares what He hears: He can be grieved and blasphemed; He divides to each one gifts and powers severally as *He will* (1 Cor. xii. 11); He groans and intercedes, etc.

The Holy Spirit is indeed spoken of as a *gift*, a mere *force*, and might, in so far, appear to be a purely neuter endowment. But even Christ is sometimes represented as the gift of God (John iv. 10, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to you, Give Me to drink," etc.). And if the Holy Ghost *communicates* divine gifts, He cannot be a gift in a material, but only in a personal sense. He is the *personal principle of the New Testament forces*, and as such indeed the power from on high, but at the same time power in the highest sense, the *absolute Power*, which as such is and must be itself personal. It is only as such a personal principle, but not as a particular power or quality of God, that He can be co-ordinated (1 Cor. xii. 4-6) with the personal *one* Lord and *one* God (Son and Father).

To the above objection we therefore reply simply in this way: In Heaven, before the throne of God, the Holy Spirit exists individually, or, in popular language, as *a person*, for the thought could not be otherwise popularly expressed, *i.e.* as the personal principle of the New Testament forces: and on earth, in the hearts of believers, as a *gift*. There in His eternal essence, here in His influences and activities, which, however, have always something of a personal character in them, a proof that they must have proceeded from a personality!

The sermon on the octave of Whit-Sunday, *the Feast of the Trinity*,—which appeared very late, and only in the West, and was only appointed in 1334, but which in some degree embraces all other festivals,—is in many aspects the test of the theologian in the preacher. Difficult as the

Trinitarian foundation of the Christian faith is, and attacked as it has been in ancient and modern times, the preacher will not meet the needs of the time by a mere allusion to the inscrutable mystery of this dogma. At the same time, however, his task does not lie in the discussion whether the passages of Scripture are more in favour of a Trinity of being, or merely a Trinity of revelation (which, besides, are by no means to be so sharply contrasted as was often the case), or whether the letter of the Creeds agrees entirely with the testimony of Scripture or not; but first of all in the offering of humble *thanksgiving* that God has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son, and Spirit, and then in opening up the unfathomable *fulness of salvation* contained in this revelation, in stating the diverse and yet united, mutually helpful and complimentary co-operation of Father, Son, and Spirit, and the progressive ethical conditions of knowing and experiencing God personally as Creator and Father, then as Son and Saviour, and, finally, as regenerating Spirit—and hence, with Father, Son, and Spirit, the ever-narrowing circle of true knowledge of God among men—and especially, therefore, the ethical religions which this revelation ought to produce in our life, in renunciation of the world, etc. In more cultured congregations apologetic statements may be added to the effect that the trinitarian personality of God does not disturb His unity, but establishes it more firmly, because it alone gives assurance of the real infinity of God, because only this conception of God is adequate to the fulness of the divine life, which reaches beyond the limits of abstract unity, and is yet again harmonised in personality, because therefore it alone can also prevent us from sinking back into the stiff and lifeless monotheism of modern Judaism and Islam, as well as from sinking down into a pantheistic heathenish deification of nature; that it is the conception of God which is sought after, and no longer found, in almost all heathen religions, and which the earliest revelation gently hinted at; and that this very

deep mystery in its turn is, nevertheless, the key to the solution of the deepest, final problem, is for our thought the only bridge between God and the world, because there lies in it the possibility of God's revelation and communication of Himself to the world.

Texts: Matt. xxviii. 18-20; 2 Cor. xiii. 13; 1 Cor. viii. 5 ff., xii. 4-6, xiii. 12 (in a mirror, in a riddle<sup>1</sup>); Eph. iv. 4-6; 1 Pet. i. 1, 2; Rom. xi. 36; Rev. i. 4, 5; also Matt. iii. 16, 17 (the baptism of Jesus); John xiv. 16, 17, 26, xv. 26, xvii. 3; 1 John iv. 13, 14. Even in the Old Testament trinitarian statements are to be found, or at least indications of differences in the being of God: Gen. i. 26, xix. 24; Ex. xxxi. 3; especially Num. vi. 24 ff. (the Aaronic blessing); Ps. xxxiii. 6, cx. 1, 2; Isa. vi. 3 ("Holy, holy, holy"), and xlviii. 16 ("from the time that it was, there am I"—the servant of God, the Messiah—"and now the Lord God"—the Father—"and His Spirit hath sent me").

Even at its very beginning the Feast of the Trinity called forth prohibitions against it. In the twelfth century some monasteries began to keep a *festum sacrosanctae trinitatis*: a Lateran Synod, 1179, declared against it. It was only in 1334 that John xxii. appointed the observance as legitimate.

It is a doctrinal, not a historical feast, but fittingly concludes the series of festivals, as a summary of all previous historical revelations of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit, and hence also it forms an appropriate foundation for the non-festival half of the year. All sermons should be built upon the belief in the Triune God, otherwise the Sundays will not be real Sundays *after Trinity*.

Nitzsch (S. 84) very truly says that we should not lose this opportunity of proclaiming the fulness of God's revelation because it may perhaps seem too difficult, or because the subject seems too vast. He who does not know how to preach on texts like Matt. xxviii. 19, or 2 Cor. xiii. 14, cannot possess the necessary reserve and foundation for catechetics and for preaching generally.

<sup>1</sup> See R. V. margin. [Trans.]

With regard to the difference between the ontological and economical view of the Trinity, the majority of Scripture passages put before us in the first instance a Trinity of revelation, but some point quite distinctly to a Trinity of being: thus even Matt. xxviii. 19, in which it is a decisive fact that the word *ὄνομα* is used for Father, Son, and Spirit, for it would be quite without parallel in the whole of Scripture that an action should take place in the name or into the name of something which is not a person. It is to me equally certain that the words (John i. 1, 2) *ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν*, (John i. 2) *πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα*, and (John i. 18) *εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Πατρὸς*, as also the Pauline expressions, "the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15), "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God," etc., expresses a relationship *inwardly* to God, and not merely outwardly to the creation, and therefore refer to distinctions which are inherent in the divine nature itself, quite apart from its relations to the world. I believe also that the speculative and philosophical consideration of a Trinity of being is much more profitable than that of a mere Trinity of revelation. But I now ask, Why is it necessary to contrast these so sharply as is often done in modern theology? If God reveals Himself to the world as Father, Son, and Spirit, and thus enters into a threefold relationship to it, must this not have a corresponding ground in His inner nature? *As God reveals Himself, so He is* and must be, if the revelation is to be a true one. *The Trinity of revelation rests upon the Trinity of being, and presupposes it.* And the Trinity of being, so far as we can with certainty follow it up in Scripture,—*i.e.* to the generation of the Son, before time was, and the procession of the Spirit,—is *in itself economical*, *i.e.* the first step towards the revelation of God: the Trinity of being is a Trinity not of a God shut up in Himself, but of One who goes out of Himself and enters into revelation and communication with Himself. In the same way *the Trinity of revelation is in itself ontological*: for if the nature of God is love, it belongs to His *nature* to reveal and communicate itself. In other words, inward relationships and events in the very being of God must lie at the root of God's actions externally: and, conversely, the inward events are themselves the preparation for and the commencement of the divine activity externally.

From this standpoint it is easier to preach on Trinity

Sunday, because it is possible, even if one is only enlarging upon the Trinity of revelation, to freely assume or occasionally even to interweave, here and there, the Trinity of being which lies at the foundation of our Creeds, and particularly our Catechisms. For the people, the distinction just mentioned has absolutely no existence: in their view both are always joined together. *Practical ethical treatment* will, of course, lead almost always to a statement of the threefold *revelation* of God, and the ethical consequences for us which result from it. Here we may show the inseparableness and unity of the operation of the Persons, how each works independently, and yet all work only in and with one another in creation, redemption, sanctification; how the work of redemption occurs in order that the aim of creation may be attained, and the work of the Spirit in order that redemption may be realised in the individual. This may be applied, for example, to the co-operation of Father, Son, and Spirit in the work of our regeneration.

This point is especially to be emphasised, that the more God reveals Himself, the more deeply does He want to draw man into His fellowship. But because men love darkness rather than the light, the circle of those who allow themselves to be enlightened by the growing light of divine revelation becomes ever smaller. Many acknowledge God as Father, even though they are not quite in earnest about the full meaning of the name; fewer still believe on God the Son; but fewer, by far, acknowledge and know by experience God the Holy Ghost in regeneration. From all this we may get topics such as these: the gracious revelation of the Triune God—(1) in the universe, (2) in the Church, (3) in the heart of the Christian.

In more educated congregations it is of advantage here and there to lay stress on the very important *apologetic supports of this fundamental Christian doctrine*, of course in an intelligible form. Such supports, for example, are afforded by the *history of religion*, since it shows how a *trinity of deities is common to almost all nations*. Hence Schelling says: "A Trinity of Divine Potentialities is the root from which have grown the religious ideas of all nations of any importance that are known to us." . . . "The Trinitarian idea is the most primitive of all." It was already indicated in the primitive revelation, and hence its caricature in the heathen religions. Thus from the very beginning, from the



plural form *Elohim* onwards, the holy Scriptures contain the germs of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the *formative movement* of this doctrine is active throughout the whole of the Old Testament, although, of course, the Trinity is not and cannot be an expressed doctrine of the Old Testament; at that time it was first of all necessary to implant Monotheism in the mind of Israel. For the very same pedagogic reasons Christ did not reveal this truth to His disciples, but left it as a legacy at His departure, after they had previously learned to believe on His Divine Sonship, on His unity with the Father, and had learned to hope for the Comforter.

A further important support is afforded by the religions which continue to hold abstract Monotheism, Judaism, and Islam. Their idea of the abstract unity of the Godhead, because it does not include a plurality, soon becomes an unloving and lifeless Theism, which therefore has speedily been obliged to seek refreshment from a religion of nature, from Pantheism. After the Jews and Mohammedans had rejected as idolatry the idea of a Son who is of the same essence with His Father, they were fated to find that their absolutely monotheistic conception of God soon became *too empty and lifeless* for them; then they yearned after the vitality which Pantheism afforded them (Spinoza, and the Persian and Indian Pantheists). It happened to them as Schiller describes in *The Gods of Greece*. The One, around whom all things move, has become a cold mathematical magnitude, which draws all life to itself, and yet itself remains pure abstraction. Hence Schiller says—

“A desert chill around us lies  
Devoid of life and warmth divine,” etc.

Abstract Monotheism and Unitarianism lead directly to Deism and Rationalism, which lacks the living bridge between God and man, and hence the doubt as to the effect of our prayers in our individual life. All this, as well as the empty, wooden Monotheism of modern Judaism and of Deism, and also the sinking back again into the deification of nature, is only to be *avoided through the Christian belief in the Trinity*: for here God is both: One, as His absolute personality requires, and at the same time the Life, the living one, the organic fulness of life and love, by which alone the idea of a truly living God is actually realised.

Here I find a unity including in itself, for the sake of its own vitality, a plurality; here the stiff, abstract monotheistic conception of God has found an outflow, because the idea of a divine purpose of love has been developed, the revelation of which has alone the power to make our hearts also wide enough for love to all men as our brethren. Here I have *the only real bridge between God and the world*; here alone is the void between the transcendent unity of God and the rich, manifold organisation of natural life filled up. Here I have, in the living presence of God in the world, all the fulness and freshness of Pantheism, and at the same time all the truth of Monotheism. Here, too, the bridge is formed between God and man by the God-man, and the chasm is filled up between sinful man and the holy God by the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God. But it is only by the filling-up of the chasm between Creator and creature that the chasm between man and man can also be filled up. Here only, therefore, is a basis afforded for the realisation of the *idea of humanity*, and from this there results the immeasurable *importance for civilisation* of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In short, the advantages which the Trinitarian view of God brings with it for our entire knowledge of God and His relation to the world are so great, that all theology which does not avail itself of this light of revelation as the foundation of its speculation must sooner or later end fruitlessly!

The Feast of the Trinity, therefore, is indeed a feast of mysteries, which demands faith, but it is also a help to faith. "The Trinity" is the obscure word<sup>1</sup>—yet at the same time the word which makes all clear—which we behold as in a mirror.

In the subsequent period after Trinity, the preacher will naturally be led to emphasise rather the *acceptance of salvation* both by the individual and by the congregation, as may be done on the basis of the events which are commemorated in the festivals.

(b) *Special Church Commemoration Days*.—As on the feast days from the biblical history of the kingdom of God, so on special Church commemoration days, the

<sup>1</sup> The reference again is obviously to *ἐν αἰνίγματι* in 1 Cor. xiii. 12, which our R.V. translates in the margin "in a riddle," and Luther's version "*in einem dunkeln Wort*." [Trans.]

preacher may and must find homiletic material from *the history of the Church* in general, as well as that of his country in particular, and his own place more particularly, partly in order to awaken afresh the consciousness of the *communio sanctorum* with previous times and races, and partly to connect the special life of the congregation with the larger whole of the history of the kingdom and of the Church.

On the *Feast of the Reformation*, the vigorous celebration of which is more and more an urgent necessity of our time, in view of the present efforts of Rome to regain the ground which it has lost, and for whose homiletic treatment the most important aspects are summed up in Heb. xiii. 7-9, it is desirable to revive afresh the memory of the Reformation period, its heroes of faith and its martyrs, partly in *historical* fashion by showing the historical features and the inward necessity of the Reformation; partly to call attention to the teaching of the Reformers as firmly rooted in Scripture, and to show the truth of the inalienable doctrines of Protestantism, without fear of man; partly in opposition to the Papal Church, which still adheres to its destructive errors, and now carries them to their natural climax in the dogma of Infallibility, thereby making absolutely impassable the chasm between Bible teaching and human legislation, and at the same time declaring itself more and more plainly to be the only true Church: and partly to testify with all freedom in opposition to a false Protestantism which is removing the foundation laid by the Reformers. In connection therewith, it is well to proclaim the true evangelical freedom from the decrees of men, having its deepest foundation in faith in the righteousness of divine grace, and, generally, the full inward glory of the Evangelical Church as it appears—notwithstanding her divided condition and civil bondage—in her spiritual possessions; in the Word which dwells in her richly; in her scriptural sacraments; in her free access to the throne of grace, not requiring the mediation

of priests, as also in the wealth of her splendid hymns; in her usually more vigorous morality as contrasted with that of Roman Catholic peoples; in the greater activity and even external growth of its members by means of missions and colonies; and now also in the advancing consciousness of the unity of all her denominations. The keynote of the commemoration of the Reformation is therefore, above all, hearty *thankfulness* to God for the gifts of salvation bestowed afresh upon the Church and graciously preserved; and, at the same time, it brings with it the *warning* of the great responsibility thus intrusted to us, of the duty of faithfully maintaining and believingly extending that which was achieved by our fathers, often with their blood, and of the necessity of conduct worthy of the gospel.

Texts (in addition to Heb. xiii.): Ex. xiii. 14; Deut. iv. 8, 9; Jos. xxiv. 22, 23; 1 Sam. vii. 12; 1 Kings viii. 57 ("The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers: let Him not leave us nor forsake us"), xviii. 17, 18 ("thou he that troubleth Israel?"), 21; Ps. iii. 7, xvi. 6, xxiii. 1, 2, lxxvii. 12-16, lxxx. 15, 16 ("visit this vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted"), lxxxviii. 3, exviii. 24, exix. 157, exliii. 5 ("I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Thy works; I muse on the work of Thy hands"); Isa. ix. 2, xxvi. 2, xxvii. 2, 3, xxix. 18, 19, xlix. 8, 16, 17 ("Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me. Thy children<sup>1</sup> shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee"), liv. 1-10, lviii. 11 ("a watered garden"); Jer. xxiii. 29 (the word like a fire and a hammer); Hos. xiv. 6, 7; Zech. i. 16, ii. 5, 10, xiv. 8; Mal. iv. 2; Matt. v. 13 ("salt of the earth," etc.), 20 ("your righteousness exceed," etc.), x. 32 ("Whosoever will confess Me," etc.), xiii. 27 (tares), 31, 32 (the grain of mustard seed), xv. 3, 7-9 ("This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth," etc.), 13 ("Every plant

<sup>1</sup> Luther's version, "Thy *builders*." [Trans.]

which My Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up"); Luke x. 38-42 (Mary and Martha), xii. 32 ("Fear not, little flock," etc.), 51, xvii. 20 ("The kingdom of God cometh not with observation"); John iv. 23 ("in spirit and in truth"), v. 39 ("Search the Scriptures"), vi. 67-69, viii. 12, xii. 35, xvii. 3 ("the only true God"), xviii. 36 ("My kingdom is not of this world"); Acts v. 38, 39 ("if this work be of God," etc.), xv. 11 ("We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved"—Peter a genuine Protestant); Rom. i. 16, iv. 14, xiii. 12; 1 Cor. i. 10, iii. 11 ("Other foundation can no man lay," etc.), iv. 20, vi. 20, vii. 23 ("Ye are bought with a price," etc.), viii. 9; 2 Cor. iii. 17 ("where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"), iv. 6, xiii. 8; Gal. iv. 31, v. 1 ("Stand fast therefore in the liberty," etc.), 13; Eph. i. 3, ii. 8-10, iv. 3, 14, 15 ("every wind of doctrine"), v. 8, 9; Phil. i. 27 ("let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ"), iii. 8-14; Col. i. 12-14 (delivered from the power of darkness), ii. 6, 7, 8, iii. 16 ("Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"); 1 Tim. ii. 4, vi. 3-5; 2 Tim. ii. 19; 1 Pet. i. 25, iii. 15; 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18; 1 John v. 4; Heb. iv. 14 ("let us hold fast our profession"), x. 23-25, xii. 1, 2 (the cloud of witnesses); Jude 20, 21; Rev. iii. 8, etc. (the open door—a little strength), 11 ("hold fast that which thou hast").

It is especially desirable at the feast of the Reformation, whether it be by historical or doctrinal or ethical discourses, to revive afresh the self-consciousness—often very feeble—of the Evangelical Church, and with it the hope of a future victory, not of any one Church in particular, but of the gospel. In our day it is particularly important to gird ourselves and buckle on our helmet. Roman Catholicism hastens on its downward path, in which the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary and the proclamation of papal infallibility and similar doctrines form distinct stages of incurable obduracy against the truth, and therefore of certain destruction. But although it is the religious, moral,

social, and, finally, even political ruin of every nation which does not free itself from its iron embrace, yet it could not fulfil its destiny without first attaining a short, indeed, but a mighty development, or making a mighty effort, during which very difficult times might occur for the professors of the gospel. Therefore—*in pace para bellum!* So long as there is still peace, let us equip ourselves for the times of storm by fearless confession, and by grounding our people more and more thoroughly in the truth of the gospel.

In *describing the superior advantages of the Evangelical Church*, this difference is to be especially made prominent, that with us the way to Christ, to the cross, to grace, stands freely open to every one directly, whereas in the Roman Catholic camp, the Church and the priest interpose themselves at every point between the poor soul and its Saviour. Further, let us show our people what a divine favour it is that the way to repentance and conversion, the way of salvation, is still in our day clearly and truly proclaimed in the Evangelical Church, so far as it is not leavened by unbelief, whereas in the Roman Catholic Church the idea of conversion has been utterly abandoned, for repentance is, with them, practically the same as penance; and when this has been performed, and the priest's injunctions have been carried out, sin is freely committed again. Let us ask any Roman Catholic if he knows anything of what it is to be born again by the Spirit of God. Unhappily, many Protestants do not know this any longer; but it is still preached among us over and over again, and is freshly emphasised from time to time.

To-day, after three and a half centuries, we can, in proof of the truth of the evangelical faith, quite confidently *take the line of historical proof*: "By their fruits ye shall know them!" What countries are more moral, more educated, more progressive, more vigorous? We may see the difference even in the same latitudes, in Switzerland, in Germany, in England, Ireland, etc., and we may note the statistics of murder, illegitimate births, etc. Only, we must leave out of our calculations our large cities, for which the Evangelical Church does not provide half enough spiritual workers [Seelsorger: *lit.*, "men who have the cure of souls." Trans.], and which therefore are often, in a spiritual sense, growing wild. Further, we must show how even the lamentable *divisions* of the Evangelical Church have never-

theless *their good side*. They keep her humble, preserve her from stiffening into uniformity; one Confession often forms a wholesome balance against the one-sidedness of the other; a mutual emulation arises, etc. In short, as in the tribes of Israel, here also there is variety in unity. The evil does not lie in the plurality of denominations and confessions in itself, but in self-seeking exclusiveness and party strife. We are not, like the Roman Church, the Church which regards itself as complete and already perfect, but the Church which says with the Apostle: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after": ever continuing to improve itself, feeling its weaknesses and stating them publicly (not concealing them like the Roman Church)—the striving, suffering Church, which, however, just for this reason above all others, is justified in its hope of victory. "Its cross," says Luther, "is its true grandeur," the pledge of its election and of its acceptance with God.

With this conviction, and with such knowledge, let us bear our testimony on the feasts of the Reformation.

*General Days of Humiliation* are based on the right idea that, as the nation has not merely individual but also common sins, national faults and transgressions, so also should the nation, now and then, as *a whole*, penitently approach God and unitedly lay its confessions and petitions before His throne. Here the preacher will do well, in all public statement of the sins of the congregation and of the nation, to associate himself always with the sinful multitude, and on his side to share, to feel, to confess its guilt, but at the same time to urge all the more strongly that the nation should consecrate afresh to the Lord its whole civil, national life, as well as its home life and church life.

Among the numerous passages which meet homiletic requirements, from Gen vi. 3 and 1 Sam. vii. 5, 6 onward, may be mentioned: 1 Kings viii. 57, 58; Neh. ix. 33; the penitential Psalms; Isa. iii. 10, 11, lv. 7, lvii. 15; Jer. ii. 13, iii. 12, 13, viii. 22, ix. 23, 24; Lam. iii. 39; Dan. ix. 4, 5, 18; Hos. x. 12, 13; Mic. vi. 3 ff.; Matt. iii. 10, vi. 12, xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 6-9; Acts iii.

19, 20, xvii. 30, 31; Rom. ii. 4 ff., xi. 22; Gal. vi. 7, 8; Jas. iv.: Rev. ii. 5, iii. 1, etc.

For the history of the Days of Humiliation and Prayer, see Pischon, on "Days of Humiliation and Prayer, especially in Prussia," Berlin, 1873 (*Neue evang. Kirchenzeitung*, 14th June 1873).

When Nitzsch (S. 85) says that, in a civil and national aspect, the congregation occupies, on Days of Humiliation and Prayer, an Old Testament relation to God, here we see indeed the disciple and friend of Schleiermacher, who regarded days of humiliation and of civil commemoration as partaking of an Old Testament character, and who, just as in his sermons generally he hardly ever mentions the sins of the people, could not bring himself on days of public humiliation to preach of repentance, but spoke of praise and thanksgiving that everything is so good; but it is only from the standpoint of this ideal and unpractical optimism that it is possible to regard the observance of national humiliation as an Old Testament anachronism. It should not indeed be any longer necessary; but so long as we are in a world full of sin and evil, and the children of God form but a little flock compared with the rest, a general day of humiliation will remain, even in Christendom, a very necessary and wholesome thing. The Christian Church in Corinth had, even as a Church, to repent on account of the scandals that had entered it, and that was very profitable to it.

The fact that many individuals in Israel were converted was not sufficient to prevent the downfall of the nation; *the people* as such, in its chief representatives, the supreme Council, the scribes, the priests, the civil rulers, should have repented and believed on Christ, and then it would have remained standing as a nation! As our national representatives and deputies have little desire to recognise this nowadays and to give God the glory, the greater need there is that the preacher should seek to awaken this acknowledgment on days of general humiliation.

*The Harvest Thanksgiving Festival* affords the preacher an excellent opportunity to show, partly the position of men as stewards of God and their coming reckoning, partly the right use of temporal goods, which is acceptable to God,



and always to be consecrated by thanksgiving, in opposition to the frequent misuse of them through covetousness, unrighteousness, and especially through the widespread vice of gluttony; the love and generosity which we owe to our neighbour; and also the wealth of the divine goodness, patience and longsuffering, which allows the rain to fall on the just and on the unjust; the faithfulness and truthfulness of God, who keeps His covenant even with His covenant-breaking children, so that seedtime and harvest do not fail—and in “bad years” the meritedness of all chastisements, their gracious limit, and the faith which casts all care on the bountiful Father in heaven, etc.; while the *Church consecration festival*, which still survives here and there—the anniversary of the building and dedication of the local church—on account of the excesses often associated with it, requires an emphatic warning against these, and especially the exhortation that the covenant concluded between God and the people, attested by the keeping up of a house of God and by entrance into it, with Word and Sacrament, should on this day be renewed in humble penitence and self-examination, but also in joyful thanksgiving and praise, so that the Holy One of Israel may still continue to dwell in the congregation.

In a country in which, with all good-natured generosity to our neighbours, a misuse of the gifts of nature is made through excess, such as hardly takes place in any other Christian land, so that German drunkenness has become to some extent proverbial in foreign lands (“il est plein comme un Allemand”), such occasions as harvest thanksgiving and church anniversaries should be availed of for a serious testimony against such national vices. In the case of many there is no greater enemy of spiritual progress, no greater hindrance to the kingdom of God among us, than the life of our inns. So much the more brightly does the divine goodness shine forth, which does not ever become weary of giving and of blessing our fields, although in many ways we make such bad use of their fruits.

Here, however, it must not be forgotten that God has

the course of nature entirely in His hand, and can arrange, according to the behaviour of men, as His own wisdom may direct; so that His goodness, shown to the unthankful through many years, may, where it does not lead to repentance, be changed into severe chastisement. This is an important difference between the Christian and the Deistic conception of God, the latter making the laws of nature a limit even for God Himself, by which God is deprived of His divinity, His absolute power, His life and activity, just as the creature is deprived of its creature-character, of its dependence upon God.

On the occasion of bad harvests the harvest thanksgiving becomes also a season of humiliation; but we must be cautious, and must not try rashly to find in this visitation a divine punishment *for particular sins*, but for our sin and unfaithfulness generally: for such chastisements often fall upon congregations which are not by any means among the worst. But here it may always be shown that, where the staff of merey does not suffice to waken a real spiritual life, the staff of trouble must be used, and is richly deserved.

Passages for *Harvest Thanksgiving in fruitful years*: Gen. viii. 22 ("So long as the earth remaineth," etc.), xxvi. 12, xxxii. 10 ("I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies," etc.); Lev. xxvi. 3, 4; Deut. viii. 10-17, xi. 13-15; Ps. xxxiv. 9 ("taste and see," etc.), lxxv. 9-12 ("Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it—Thou preparest them corn—Thou waterest its furrows [Luther]—Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness," etc.), lxxvii. 7, 8, ciii. 1, 2, civ. 27, 28 ("These wait all upon Thee," etc.), cxliv. 13-15, cxlv. 15, 16, cxlvii. 7-14; Isa. lv. 10, 11; Joel ii. 13, 14; Matt. v. 45; Luke xii. 20, 21 (the rich man); Acts xiv. 17; Rom. ii. 4 ("despisest thou the riches of His goodness"); Gal. vi. 9; Eph. v. 18-20 ("Be not drunk with wine," etc.); Heb. xiii. 16, etc.

*In moderate years*: 1 Sam. xiv. 6; 2 Kings iv. 43, 44; Ps. xxxiii. 18, 19, xxxvii. 16 ("A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked"); Prov. xv. 16; Lam. iii. 22-24; Hag. i. 5, 6, 9; Matt. iv. 4 ("Man shall not live by bread alone"), vi. 25 ("Be

not anxious about your life"), 30, 31: x. 29-31; Luke xii. 15, 24, xxi. 34, xxii. 35 ("lacked ye anything?"); 1 Tim. vi. 6-8 ("Godliness with contentment is great gain," etc.): 1 Pet. v. 7.

*On the failure of crops:* Lev. xxvi. 20, 21; Deut. viii. 3; 1 Kings xvii. 14 (the meal in the barrel not wasted); 2 Chron. vi. 28-30; Ps. xxiii. 1 ("I shall not want"); xxxiv. 11 ("They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing"), xxxvii. 19 ("They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied"), l. 15 ("Call upon Me in the day of trouble," etc.), xxxvii. 15; Isa. lviii. 7; Jer. xxxii. 42; Joel i. 10, 11; Amos iv. 6; Hab. ii. 17-19, iii. 17, 18 ("Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines: the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat,—yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation"); Matt. vii. 9-11, xiv. 20 ("They did eat and were filled—fragments twelve baskets full"); John vi. 5, 6, xxi. 5-7 ("Children, have ye any meat?"); 1 Cor. x. 13 ("who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able"); Phil. iv. 12, 13 ("both to be full and to be hungry"); Heb. x. 35, 36 ("Cast not away therefore your confidence—for ye have need of patience," etc.), xiii. 5 ("Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee").

*Passages for Church anniversary:* Ex. xix. 6; Lev. xxvi. 11, 12; Jos. xxiv. 15-22; 1 Chron. xvii. 10-12; Ps. v. 8-9, xxiv. 3-6, xxvi. 6-8, lxxv. 2-5, lxxxiv. xcviii. 5 ("Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever"); Eccles. iv. 17; Isa. lii. 6, 7; Matt. xiii. 8, 16, 17, xxi. 13 ("My house shall be called a house of prayer"); Luke viii. 18, xii. 48; John iv. 23, 24, x. 22-28 ("It was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication—My sheep hear My voice"), xiv. 23; 1 Cor. iii. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. i. 3, ii. 19-21, iv. 3-6; 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5 ("living stones"), 9; Heb. x. 23-25; Jas. i. 21-25:

Rev. xxi. 3 ("Behold the tabernacle of God is with men," etc.).

The *Memorial of the Dead*, originating in the Roman Catholic feast of "All Souls," at the close of the Church year, differs, like every Protestant memorial celebration, from the Roman Catholic festival in this respect, that the latter is a service for *the dead*, and is intended to have an effect upon their condition, whereas the Protestant memorial is a service for the *living*. While this anniversary should call us first of all, in preparation for our own last hour, to humble adoration of the Lord of life and death, who, as such, passes every year through the ranks gathering His sheaves, it should also serve to bring the congregation to feel the loss sustained by individual families as the common loss of all, in thankful remembrance of those who have gone before, and thus more vividly to awaken the feeling of organic unity in one divine family, and also the union between the struggling Church below and the perfect Church above—in which latter connection *the comfort* of the eternal fellowship in Christ of believers, both of the departed and of those who remain, and future deliverance from all the sufferings of our mortal life, should form a soothing conclusion.

*Principal passages:* Job xiv. 1-4; Ps. xxxix. 13, xc. 2, 3, 10-12, cii. 25-29, ciii. 15-18 ("As for man, his days are as grass—but the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting," etc.), cxvii. 5, 6; Prov. x. 7; Isa. li. 10, 11; Dan. xii. 10-13; Matt. xxiv. 42-44, xxv. 34-46; Luke xx. 36, 38; John vi. 37-39, xvi. 22; Acts xxiv. 15, 16; Rom. v. 1-5, viii. 17, 18; 1 Cor. xv.; 2 Cor. iv. 17 ("our light affliction, which is but for a moment," etc.), v. 7-9; 1 Thess. iv. 13 ff.; 1 Pet. i. 6-9 ("though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold temptations: that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth," etc.); 1 John v. 4; Heb. xi. 13-16, xii. i.; Rev. vii. 9-17, xx. 12, xxi. 1-7, 6-8, xxii. 11-15.

Let us on this anniversary avoid tears of artificial sentiment, which earn cheap laurels, and also an insipid general demonstration of the fact that an immortality, a meeting again, is to be assumed, and the reason for it: not to speak of the advanced "Protestant Liberalism" which nowadays, in Switzerland, in Bremen, etc., for example, finds the only immortality in our continuing to live in the memory of those who survive us, and unfolds this windy comfort even at the grave!

Let us avoid *universal* beatifications, which are only too gladly listened to, and which therefore are very frequently pronounced by those who are servants of men.

As the feeling of a real unity with one another is rare in a State Church, the more should such opportunities be availed of to awaken it. On this day the congregation is a *family*—looking back, in sadness indeed, and yet in grateful love, and at the same time looking up in firm confidence and living hope—whose ranks are being ever thinned and then also filled up again; it feels itself in the present, surrounded by death and the fear of death, and yet it looks away into the future and feels itself in Christ, the Prince of Life, linked to the departed spirits with bands of love which even death cannot sunder!

Literature for collections of texts:—

SCHULER, *Repertorium biblischer Texte für Kasualpredigten* ("Repertoire of Biblical Texts for Sermons on Special Occasions, and also for Festivals"). Halle, 1820.

STIER, *Privat-Agende*, 5 Aufl.

BERTSCH and KLAIBER, *Sammlung biblischer Kasualtexte*. Stuttgart, 1868.

BERNHARD, *Biblische Konkordanz oder dreifaches Register über Sprüche, Textstellen, etc.*, 1850, and later.

### 3. HOMILETICAL MATERIAL AS DETERMINED BY THE SPECIAL CONDITIONS AND NEEDS OF THE CONGREGATION.

The contents of the sermon must have regard not merely to Church doctrine, custom, and seasons, but, since it stands between the eternal Word of God and the living time-element of the congregation, also to *the special circumstances of the people*, and moreover the inner conditions of

the congregation generally, as well as the special events which require Church observance and address.

(a) *The internal conditions and general needs.*

In the case of a quite lifeless congregation the sermon will be principally of an *awakening* character; in one which is spiritually alive and energetic, it will be mainly *edifying*, leading to a deeper Christian knowledge and experience; in a frivolous and pleasure-seeking one, it will be more *sobering* and reminding of the solemnity of death; in a rich and culture-proud one, it will be more of a humbling character, *warning*, leading men to recognise their real nakedness; in poor congregations, oppressed with cares of bodily sustenance or otherwise severely tried, it will rather open up the *fountains of comfort* of the gospel; but in most cases *it will have something in it of all these*, because all these conditions are usually found mixed up in the different classes of every congregation. But even the most barren Christian congregation must not be treated by the sermon as a heap of heathen, since its people are at least baptized and members of the Church, nor is even the best to be treated as made up of purely true Christians, since the unconverted and unregenerate are numerous everywhere, and the converted are far from being perfect. The *vices* which are specially prevalent in a congregation, the most prominent dangers and hindrances of spiritual progress, are to be specially kept in view and contended against in preaching and in the individual "cure of souls." Further, deeply impressive experiences of prosperity or of chastisement (fire, hail, floods, war, pestilence, etc.), and in general whatever unusually stirs men's minds to grief or gladness, should be illumined from the holy Scriptures in sermons, Bible-readings, and prayer-meetings, and the people should thus be led to the correct Christian view of the event. On the other hand, the preacher has also to be on his guard against making himself too dependent, in his

choice of special, applicable material, on the changing current of temporary experiences, and, in his description of particular conditions, and especially particular sins, against drawing portraits of individual members of the congregation which can be easily recognised, and which only causes irritation. If now and then, in stirring times, the *political sphere* is not to be quite excluded, he must, however, beware of fostering the excitement and party cleavage by entering into distinctively political questions and by mentioning party names, but must rather seek—without hate but also without fear, by a warning testimony against all injustice on the part of high or low, of friend or foe, by exhortation to patience, to Christian submission, to love even towards one's enemies—to make himself a sort of Christian conscience for the congregation in contrast with the usually one-sided influences of the daily press, which often only goad the passions on and mislead in many ways the judgment.

The details of these questions belong to Pastoral Theology. (Cf. CL. Harms, *Pastoral Theologie*, i. S. 79 ff.; Büchsel, *Erinnerungen aus dem Leben eines Landgeistlichen* ("Reminiscences from the Life of a Country Pastor"), ii. S. 166 ff.; Palmer, *Hom.* S. 86 ff., S. 493 ff.)

The task of the preacher with respect to the appropriateness of the contents of the sermon to the spiritual state of the congregation is briefly this: *the due combination of the awakening and edifying* (see above, chap. i. 1, (b), (β), on the scope and aim of preaching, p. 70, ff.), of which elements sometimes the one, sometimes the other, must predominate according to circumstances, but neither should be at any time quite excluded: for the conditions of the people oscillate between the two extremes: neither utterly heathen nor absolutely Christian. The treatment of the congregation as utterly heathen would provoke irritation, while the other mode of treatment would produce self-deception or spiritual pride. One must be guided by the actual spiritual needs: "Preach," said an experienced preacher to young candidates for the ministry, "as if one half of your hearers heard the gospel for the *first* time, and as if the other half heard it for the *last* time!"

If we have much to find fault with, and if we have to contend against really great evils, let us not forget to approve at the same time what is worthy of approval. Rebuke makes an impression much more easily if the people see that the preacher keeps his eyes open also for what is good in them.

For the rest, the preacher must live with his people, and must sympathise with and share whatever of joy and sorrow affects them. He will therefore be unable to allow any important *events which enter deeply into the life of the congregation to pass unnoticed*, for he has to help the congregation to a true scriptural, Christian estimate of them. On the other hand, he must not bring into the pulpit every town or village scandal, which only excites curiosity and does not promote devotion. The adjustment of one's self generally to the course of events has its obvious limits. Although the spirit of the time always reflects itself in the sermons of the time, and the preacher is always to a certain extent dependent upon it, yet it is a very ambiguous and easily misleading statement which Schweizer makes (S. 268): "Above all, the choice of material for preaching is determined generally by the living current of the *Zeitgeist*." The preacher who allows himself to be guided by this *above all* is, indeed, a man to be pitied, and will have to let himself be tossed about by every wind of doctrine. No; that which must above all determine the material of preaching, even in sermons on special occasions, is that which endures eternally, and not the transitory, and the changing element from the present is only to be introduced so far as it is necessary to produce results, to remove errors, etc., and to show that the Word of God is indeed a lamp for every question of life to lead to action, and for every experience of life to lead to patience.

In the description of particular conditions in the congregation *we must not go too much into detail*, although to keep to quite general statements is also evil and produces no result. It was formerly thought that the different ranks and callings require special sermons; but it is quite sufficient now and then to let fall in some directions special hints and exhortations. (So also Krauss, S. 328, 346, 351, on true and false particularising.) It was certainly too much of a good thing when that preacher of Nürnberg, in the Sebaldus Church in 1692, thought that he must take up



*a special handicraft* in his sermon from each lesson (*pericopa*) during a whole year's course, *e.g.* on the Fourth Sunday in Advent, the shoemakers, because John says he is not worthy to unloose the shoe-latchet of our Lord;<sup>1</sup> on the Second Sunday after Epiphany, the innkeepers, because Jesus made water into wine: on Easter Sunday, the apothecaries, because the women bought spices: on Quasimodogeniti (First Sunday after Easter), the locksmiths, "When the doors were shut"; on Rogate, the beggars, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father"; on the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, the shopkeepers, "as he entered into a certain market-place" (Luther's version); on the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity, the beer-brewers, "What shall we drink"; on the Eighteenth, the muzzle-makers, "That he had closed the mouths of the Sadducees:" on the Twenty-first, the watchmakers, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him;" and on the Twenty-fifth, the bookbinders, "Let him that readeth understand" (*Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung*, 1827, No. 72: E. Palmer, S. 494). Everyone sees that it is not allowable to form, from such external elements of the text, the theme round which all should centre; that it is a perverted method to make the shell into the kernel; this is merely trifling! Now and then, in sermons on the Ten Commandments, for example, it is no doubt necessary to censure certain sins and tricks of trade, but let us take care that we do not portray individual persons, which only causes bad blood. Let us say what is necessary to individuals face to face, but not from the pulpit.

It is, however, quite wrong and unscriptural—as many timid preachers do who do not want to give offence—in describing the sins and vices of the people, *not to call the thing by its right name*, but to beat round about the bush in a general fashion. That is a miserable fear of men, a cowardice and unfaithfulness which cannot be justified before God. We owe to all men the whole complete truth! And since the cowardly world is so little accustomed, even among friends, to tell one the necessary truth, because it is often disagreeable, all the more need is there for the preacher and pastor to do it. And let him not hesitate, even if many are angry at his plain speaking. Even in

<sup>1</sup> See the "Gospel" for the Day, in the Book of Common Prayer. Trans.]

Christ's time men said, "This is an hard saying, who can bear it?" Rather let him console himself with the truth of that saying of Cl. Harms (and Gossner), *Pastoraltheologie* (S. 81):—"That which does not provoke the wicked does not edify the converted; that which does not strike the stubborn, will not awaken the slumbering; that which does not kill, will not make alive; that which is not to some a savour of death unto death, will not be to any pious soul a savour of life unto life; the bee which has no sting makes no honey"—a saying which every preacher should write in his pastoral theology. But that, so far as regards expression, decorum is always to be observed even in the plainest of speaking; that many follies of the time, *e.g.* the "table-turning" of twenty years ago, are not to be brought by name into the pulpit, because the name is often unworthy of the pulpit, and would make the church a spiritual tattling-place—this we shall see in our treatment of the formal part.

With regard to the *political life of our time*, it is easy to say, "No politics in the pulpit," and in general this is quite right. But even Schleiermacher showed, in his *Practical Theology* (S. 210), that in stirring times it is not only impossible to keep far away from the pulpit that which is moving all minds, but that "in such conditions men's consciences are very easily led astray, and therefore public teaching is very necessary; hence it would be unjustifiable not to give it; the opposite maxim has its origin on the one hand in cowardice and narrow-mindedness, and on the other, in want of skilfulness in adequately discharging, without offence, a duty which one feels he ought to fulfil" (cf. Schleiermacher's sermon at the Memorial Service for Queen Louisa, 5th Aug. 1810, or his sermon of 28th March 1813, in which he read from the pulpit the appeal of the king to his people). Certainly, he who in the wars of freedom, for example, or in that of 1870, did not bring into his pulpit a single word about the political relations, gave a sad account of himself as a Christian and a patriot. Even in 1866 it was necessary to say to the people, "Why do the people murmur—let every one murmur against his sin." The mentioning of *names of countries*, however, in this connection, and still more *names of persons*, is so hurtful to every hearer who rightly distinguishes between the secular and the spiritual, that it spoils for him all further edification. He then sees in the preacher immediately a party-man, in

opposition to whom other party standpoints have certainly a relative right. The preacher's work is only to *let light fall from the Word of God on such political movements* as touch deeply the life of the Church, *in order that they may be rightly understood*, estimated, and carried out, and *in doing so to testify, to censure, or to approve, without fear*, so that the congregation may hear in the preacher the throb of its own conscience. If he has heart and conscience in the right place, he will not need to fear the Damocles sword of our *modern pulpit reporting*. Yet even in the most stirring times a prudent limit is to be observed in the allusion to political circumstances, for just when all newspapers and conversation are occupied with politics, it is often a boon to the congregation if on Sunday it can escape for an hour from the tumult into the peace of God's house; but if in the Church it hears "the perorating with the battle-cries of the day, it does not in the least learn to rise above the noise of the stream of time to that which is eternal."

A beautiful example of the possibility, even with continuous exposition of the text, of paying the necessary attention to suddenly-arising needs of the congregation for exhortation and comfort, is afforded by Chrysostom, who, as presbyter at Antioch, delivered his sermons during Passion Week at a time when the whole town, on account of an insurrection, was threatened with annihilation by the emperor, and hung in the balance between fear and hope. This series of sermons bears the title *Contra statuarum eversores*. The attitude of Schleiermacher, during the French rule, was exemplary in his sermons of that time. Nitzsch, too, spent the first year of his ministry in Wittenberg during the siege of 1815, and had to preach there while an adjutant of the French commandant sat below the pulpit with note-book and pencil.

(b) *The Events and Church Needs of the Individual Christian Life (Occasional Addresses).*

The preacher has to apply the Word of God not only to the congregation and its conditions as a whole, but also to the incidents of the Church life, and personal life in particular, and to hallow them by it. This is done—in addition to private pastoral care—in the *occasional address*,

which has to apply the general passage of Scripture to the particular case just as the Sunday sermon has to apply to the eternal verities of faith to the temporal life of the people; and it is the more important, since, under our modern conditions, it is often the only way by which the word of salvation can still be brought to bear on many who are quite estranged from the Church. It must not, as often happens, put the official act itself in the background as a secondary matter, but must prepare the liturgical part as the chief point of the function. The general character and scope of the occasional address is determined by the particular occasion, and is either sacramental (baptismal, confirmation, preparatory, and Communion addresses), or congregational (ordination and induction addresses, entrance sermons, farewell sermons, etc.), or of a general human character (marriage and funeral addresses). Its work, speaking generally, is to put the Word of God and the particular event in such connection with one another that, on the one hand, the statement of Scripture truth which should always dominate is not sacrificed to the emphasising of the personal elements, and that, on the other hand, in the statement of the biblical and Christian, the personal shall not be neglected (which would indicate a lack of sympathy); and, finally, that they shall not be connected with one another in a merely external way. Rather should the general biblical and individual elements be so interwoven that the general Christian element will find its confirmation in the particular, and will also get the charm of a fresh interest, while the particular is explained, put in its proper light, hallowed and transformed by the truth of universal faith. Hence it also follows that only that which is in some way of value for Christian consideration and edification should be introduced, and that as the Church wants a blessing to flow to individuals through such observances, all must be pervaded by the spirit of sanctifying love.

See Palmer, S. 281 ff. The subject is the connecting of the universal Christian element with the special event. (Schweizer and Henke—"not without reason," says Krauss—want to change the expression "occasional address" [*Kasualrede*] into "liturgical address.") Hence it is just as wrong to occupy oneself only with the personal as to expound only the universal truths of Scripture. But neither is it right merely to place the two elements side by side, as, e.g. Heinrich Müller (*Die Gräber der Heiligen*, Frankfurt, 1700) expounds his text through long sections without any reference to the occasion, and then, just as precisely, introduces the entirely personal element. It is necessary to blend the two, to let them interpenetrate one another thoroughly. The universal must have a reference—even if only a tacit one—to the individual, and the particular must be equally pervaded by general biblical truth. This excludes, once and for all, everything that is unimportant, indifferent, or valueless for edification, but also all untrue, extravagant eulogies at the grave, and on the other hand, also, all harsh censure, which only produces anger and bitterness.

For examples, see Palmer, *Homiletik*, S. 324 ff., and especially his *Kasualredensammlung*, 4 Aufl. 1864, 1865; Dr. Beck, *Kasualreden*, 1867; G. Leonhardi, *Altarreden; Sammlungen in Beiträgen von namhaften Geistlichen der luther. Kirche*, 3 Aufl. 1871; Schuler, *Repertorium biblischer Texte für Kasualpredigten*, 3 Aufl. 1870; Stier, *Privatagende*, 4 Aufl. 1857. For texts, see Bertsch and Klaiber, *Sammlung biblischer Kasualtexte*, 1868; Haupt, *Biblisches Kasuallexikon, neu bearbeitet von Wohlfahrt*, 1852; Bernhard, *Biblische Konkordanz*, 1850, etc., part ii.; Kasuale's *Textregister*; Seyler, *Von der pastoralemente Rede*, Gütersloh, 1872 (too prolix!); Appuhn, *Kasualreden*, 1 Teil, Magdeburg, 1872; Riemann, 2 *Sammlung*, 1877 (has a deep conception of the function of the occasional address, and fulfils it finely; especially several baptismal addresses); W. F. Öhler, *Sammlung von Kasualreden*, 1876, 1877 (from the discourses of Württemberg clergy); L. A. Petri, *Zum Bau des Hauses Gottes*, Hanover, 1875, ed. Steinmetz, chiefly containing occasional addresses; C. F. W. Hoffmann, *Kasualreden*, 3 Aufl. Ansbach, 1879; Kapff, *Kasualreden*, Stuttgart, 1880; Dickmann and Lehmann, *Pastoralbibliothek, Sammlung von Kasualreden*, 1880–1883, 5 Bände; Stöckicht, *Textverzeich-*

*niss zu Kasualreden*, 1882 (a large selection); Herold, *Pastoralpredigten* (ordination, synod, and farewell sermons), 1884, a collection of sermons by several clergymen.

(a) *The Baptismal Address.* The baptismal address, not everywhere in use (*e.g.* in Württemberg and the Anglican Church), should, where possible, be held in the church and not in the house, and, in order that the liturgical act of baptism itself may not be obscured, should always be short. According to the above canon it has to make clear the meaning of baptism, the rich import of Matt. xxviii. 19 (the inclusion in the blessing of the covenant of grace in Christ, cf. circumcision in the Old Testament), and of the baptismal liturgy which follows, and, in cases that are not very ordinary at least, to connect it, by brief, tender hints, with the personal circumstances of the particular family; in opposition to the common denial of original sin, to emphasise the necessity of receiving baptismal grace—as counterbalancing it—and perhaps also to indicate occasionally the justification of *infant baptism*, especially in sectarian neighbourhoods, but without polemical points, and at the same time to give expression to the thankfulness, the hopes (*e.g.* Luke i. 66, “What then shall this child be?”), wishes, and plans of the parents. It should also solemnly impress upon the conscience of *parents and god-parents*, having regard to the vow which is to follow, their comprehensive duties of *upbringing and of prayer*, the training of the child’s soul as a living member of the body of Christ with as much protection as possible from the evils of the world, and the latter all the more that the spiritual duties of god-parents are, as a rule, generally neglected in our day. Further, it is not to be forgotten that in many non-churchgoing families the baptismal address affords to the pastor one of the few opportunities which he has to urge upon those present the blessing of church fellowship, and the dangers of habitual neglect of it, without bitterness, but in serious, impressive love showing forth the grace of God, which meets them in this

sacrament in such a friendly way, and holds out its hand for a covenant. All this may be done by using the parable of the vine and its branches, of the Good Shepherd, etc., reminding them of the Word that became flesh, of God's pleasure in the little candidate for baptism, for Christ's sake (Matt. iii. 17), of the planting by baptism into the power of Christ's death (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12), of the gradual putting on of Christ and transformation into His likeness (Gal. iii. 27; 1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. iii. 18), the honour (Luke x. 20, names written in heaven; Ps. cxliv., Lord, what is man, etc.), and duty of the baptismal covenant (1 Pet. iii. 21, *συνειδησεως αγαθης ἐπερώτημα*; 1 John v. 4, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world"; John vi. 37, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out"), etc.

In the case of children born *out of marriage*, we should only express censure in the form of sympathy with the poor child, but at the same time point to the One who is the true Father of all, to John xiv. 18 ("I will not leave you orphans"<sup>1</sup>), etc. (cf. Cosack's *Treatise on the Baptism of Illegitimate Children*; Palmer, S. 288).

On the doctrinal signification of baptism it may be merely observed here, that *the exaggeration of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration*, the transference of the expression *λοῦτρον παλινγενεσίας* (Tit. iii. 5) from adult baptism (which alone is assumed in the Apostolic age) to our modern infant baptism, as is done, for example, on the strict Lutheran side, is partly an assistance to baptism, and partly leads to the very dangerous state of security in which everyone who has been baptized and brought up in the orthodox way regards himself as a regenerate person. On the other hand, the view which is becoming more and more prevalent in reformed countries, that baptism is *only the ceremony of reception into the Church*, the dedication of children to the Lord, and in so far, it is true, of benefit to them, but without the communication of any special sacramental grace—is so void of significance, and weakens so much the importance of baptism, that (as is seen from the state of things in

<sup>1</sup> Luther's version. [Trans.]

England and America) it is not likely to promote baptism any longer. For the question is then naturally asked, Why begin so early with this ceremony? We can dedicate our children to the Lord from their birth, and even before it, in prayer—even without baptism. *The correct view may be supposed here also to lie between the two.* Even baptism has, like the sacraments generally, *a collative force.* We are thereby introduced into the blessing of the covenant of grace in Christ, as in the Old Testament by circumcision into the blessing of the covenant of works. The baptismal grace which is thereby communicated, is a specific gift on the part of Father, Son, and Spirit, *a living force, a seed of regeneration* in the children, an inestimable counterbalance to original sin, which, even though not exclusively, renders possible the development of man in what is good, notwithstanding his evil propensities; the natural superior force of the latter is thereby in some measure paralysed, and hence this support and strength for what is good should be afforded to the children from the beginning, so that no portion of the development of their life may be spent without this divine help to what is good. *But seed is not yet fruit;* it may be crushed under foot, or, on the other hand, properly developed into fruit. It is only the personal acceptance and experience of baptismal grace and its power, the victory by means of it over the natural disposition, the domination of this grace in man, that is the actual regeneration, and this can only take place in the personal conscious conflict with the old man, but not in the dawning dream-life of the suckling.

For vindication of infant baptism in particular, compare Martensen, *Die christliche Taufe und die baptistische Frage*, 2 Aufl. Gotha, 1860 ["Christian Baptism and the Baptist Question"].

In addition to the *brief* statement (which in baptisms of the "upper classes" is often far too long) of the doctrinal side, the baptismal address has to keep in view much more the *ethical, practical side*, thankfulness to God for the gift of the child (even in the case of poor people, who look with anxiety on the increasing little crowd of children, to hold fast to the truth that "children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward"), thankfulness for the grace of God which now draws near in such a kindly way, and exhortation to the duties of Christian training,



intercessory prayer, guarding them from evil, etc. Especially must it not be forgotten how lamentably the institution of *god-parents* has lost its signification in the eyes of most. It is to them a mere form, an expense for the christening-present, and if all goes well, an honour and token of friendship. Very few of them think of the duty of prayer, of advising with the parents about the training of the child, the choice of a calling, etc. It is therefore desirable to remind parents and god-parents, with solemn earnestness, of the responsibility which they undertake in the sight of God in baptism, and in houses which are otherwise closed to the Church, and to the Word of God, to use this opportunity of scattering good seed.

In the *baptism of a Jewish proselyte* this difference is to be observed, that in this case confirmation and baptism are combined in one act. The change rests in this case on voluntary decision, and on the already acquired desire for salvation and grace. Here also the introductory address should specially emphasise the moral aspect, conversion, and regeneration.

( $\beta$ ) *The Confirmation Address*, which, as a rule, coincides with the Sunday sermon, must—since in this case several are addressed together—allow the personal element, so far as it is not a common one (*e.g.* the child's relation to parents and teachers), to fall into the background. As the conclusion and practical summary of the preparatory instruction it has to state the objective signification and importance of the impending renewal of the covenant, the blessing, but also the personal responsibility for the comprehensive vow which is about to be taken. The new man should now, by a solemn declaration of intention, become the victor in the catechumens, and thus capable of a larger measure of unction, and all childish fickle ways should for ever give way to a real earnestness, a dedication to God which renounces self and the world. Moreover, at this boundary line between school and life, with the crossing of which the full, independent church-membership begins, and the entrance into a particular calling usually takes place, looking at the moral and religious dangers

which are thereby intensified, the address should, with tender pastoral love, erect a sign-post showing the right way to walk through life, to keep the blessing of baptism and confirmation in the more independent intercourse with the world, which is full of snares,—and this in such a way, that even the parents, sponsors, and teachers will clearly recognise in this mirror the sacred duties which devolve upon them.

E. Ohly, *Wachet, stehet im glauben! Sammlung von konfirmationsreden*, 1880.

Texts are very numerous and varied. *E.g.* the Epistle for *Quasimodogeniti* (First Sunday after Easter), 1 John v. 4 (“Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith”); the gospel for *Quasimodogeniti* may also be used, John xx. 19–31, the breathing on them with the Holy Ghost, and Thomas (in some such way as this: “The peace and the spirit of Christ as the true portion (1) for life; (2) for suffering; (3) for death”); 2 Tim. ii. 1 ff. (“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. . . . Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. . . . Remember that Jesus Christ was raised,” etc.); 1 Cor. vii. 23 (“Ye are bought with a price: be not ye the servants of men”); Luke x. 42 (“One thing is needful”); Luke xi. 28 (“Blessed are they that hear the word of God”), etc.; Phil. i. 6 (“Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”); John xv. 4–6 (“Abide in me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself,” etc.); John vi. 67–69 (“Will ye also go away? . . . Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life,” etc.); 2 Pet. iii. 18 (“Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”).

(γ) *The Preparatory Address*, which, when the Communion falls on a Feast Day, connects itself naturally with this particular season of the Church year, has essentially to exhort to the *self-examination and repentance* which are indispensable for the profitable partaking of the Lord’s Supper, so that the general confession which follows may

be uttered from the inmost soul of each, and thus may become the true and salutary expression of his personal guilt, penitence, and believing desire for salvation. A short exposition of the *Decalogue* is especially helpful, and ought to be repeated from time to time—and this, too, of each commandment in its far-reaching scope (cf. for example, B. Kapff's *Kleines Kommunionbuch*), in connection with which sins that are especially prevalent, evil habits which blunt the conscience are to be unsparingly exposed and called by their true name, without vague generalisation, since experience shows that very few proceed to apply the latter in concrete fashion to themselves. At the same time, the fact must not be overlooked that to point to the love of Christ crucified remains the most impressive penitential sermon. After the awakening of a thorough feeling of guilt and desire for pardon, along with which we should inquire also as to the honesty of the purpose of future improvement, let us unfold the meaning of the Supper, the wealth contained in this legacy of Christ—occasionally at greater length—but *without attack* on those who despise the sacrament (a matter which *at this time* has nothing to do with those present), or on those who differ from us doctrinally, since this cannot promote the spirit of the Supper. Instead of sharply emphasising the catch-words of the confessions (as formerly they used to do with the words *in, cum, and sub*), let us confine ourselves rather to biblical expressions (*κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος—αἵματος*, 1 Cor. x., the best formula of union), and absorb the dogmatic element always into that of edification. As at the beginning, access to the Lord's table should not appear too easy to the hearer, so at the close it should not appear too difficult.

Karl Friedrich Hartmann's *Beichtreden*, edited by Ehmann, 2 Aufl. Heilbrom, 1873 (eighty-five addresses based on the Church year).

The address of humiliation [Ger. *Beichtrede*] was formerly in many places separated from the address or sermon pre-

paratory to the Lord's Supper, especially in the Lutheran Church, in order properly to emphasise for the people the doctrinal element in the latter in opposition to Calvinists and Papists. Such a *polemical dogmatism*, which embitters more than it edifies, has been *rightly abandoned*. And hence the address of humiliation and the sacramental address are now usually combined as the preparatory address. The doctrinal is not indeed to be excluded; from time to time the importance, the nature, the signification of the sacramental gift of the Holy Supper, must be made clear; but the polemic element is in this connection utterly evil; our best plan is to keep to biblical expressions, such as *zovwía* (1 Cor. x. 16), with regard to which the attempt should never have been made to fix in definite form a mystery which cannot, in its inmost nature, be reduced to a perfectly comprehensible and adequate expression for our understanding.

Everything doctrinal should be immediately included in the element of edification, as Kapff does in his *Kleines Kommunionbuch*, which is highly to be recommended, explaining the supper, first as a memorial feast, and then as a feast of reconciliation, of union, of sanctification, and of resurrection.

But the edifying character of the address does not exclude the unsparing exposure of sins and vices. The teaching of some Darbyites, that every trace of the feeling of sin should be quite absent from the observance of the Supper, because in this Supper Christians already celebrate here below their perfect union with Christ, is in opposition to the apostle's injunction to show forth the Lord's *death*, which cannot be done without reminding us of sin.

*Texts*, besides those passages which refer to the Lord's Supper: 2 Cor. v. 17-21 ("Be ye reconciled to God," etc.); Matt. ix. 10-13 ("They that are whole need not a physician"); Matt. xi. 28 ff. ("Come unto Me, all ye that labour," etc.); John i. 29 ("Behold the Lamb of God"); Ex. xii. 11 ("And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand"); Ps. xxiii. 5 ("Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies"); Zech. xiii. 1 (the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness). The Penitential Psalms. But repentance is also preached by texts which reveal the love of God in Christ and offer friendly invitation,

such as 1 John iii. 1 ("Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God"); with solemn warning, Matt. ix. 16 (no new cloth on the old garment); Luke ix. 62 ("No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"); also, perhaps, 1 King xix. 7 ("Arise and eat: because the journey is too great for thee"); Rom. iii. 23, 24 ("All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," etc.); Ps. xlii. 1 ("As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God"); Gen. xli. 9 ("I do remember my faults this day"); Luke xiii. 6-9 ("A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon"); John vi. 37 ("Him that cometh to Me," etc.).

(δ) In the *Marriage Address* the essential *objective* elements are: The sacredness of the divinely appointed marriage state, its blessing and its conditions. These elements must form the starting-point or the end of all *personal* references, which in this case may be somewhat more prominent—and in such a way that the individual element is not left without reference to the text, to the kingdom of God and the Christian aim of life, and may therefore be profitable also for the others who are present. In the expression of the belief that God is the founder of this marriage bond; in thanksgiving to God for His previous care over the bridal pair; in the encouragement to continue in the grace they have experienced, or in the exhortation—affectionately serious, yet avoiding all embittering details—to begin a new life with the entrance into a new state; by emphatically reminding them of their great mutual responsibility in undertaking so great a promise before the altar of God, who will seek for and find the tears of the wife and the husband's sighs in His day, and at the same time of the love which makes easy all duties of the married state and their fulfilment in good and evil days—the love which is the bond of perfectness; in the warning not to depend upon the permanence of a merely human affection which is not hallowed by the Spirit

of God and strengthened continuously from above to bear with one another in meekness; in allusion to the future calling of the husband and the help-meet service of the wife, to domestic life generally in its tender or serious aspect; and especially in the exhortation to make Christ a third part in the covenant, to smooth over all difficulties immediately by regular family worship and united prayer, and so to prevent the growth of any root of bitterness, and so on—the general, objective, and personal elements may be blended in the most appropriate and effective way.

E. OHLY, *Dein Gott mein Gott* (a collection of marriage addresses), 1880.

M. F. OHLER, *Ich und mein Haus wollen dem Herrn dienen* (marriage addresses), 1880.

AHLFELD, *Der Christliche Hausstand*, ["The Christian Household"] (a wedding-gift in sermons), 5 Aufl. 1877.

SUPPE, *Lass meinen Gang gewiss sein in deinem Wort* ["Order my steps in Thy Word"] (a collection of occasional sermons, i. Heft, Baptismal Addresses), 1888.

In the latter aspect, the approved method may be recommended, of taking refuge *immediately* in *united prayer* in case of differences and bad humour. Such prayer has, more than anything else, a wonderfully soothing and healing effect. In addition to this, the good custom, which still exists in many places, of the bridal pair visiting the pastor privately before the marriage, may be turned to profitable account (see Pastoral Theology).

With reference to the marriage address itself, it is indeed true, as Harms, in his *Pastoraltheologie*, ii. 11, reminds us, that we should "not exaggerate too much the personal, the domestic, the human," even though it is often expected; but, on the other hand, it is also evil if the speaker only evolves from his text general truths in purely objective fashion, as if he had the whole congregation before him. The address should specially interest and lay hold of the bridal pair, and leave behind it, in them, a blessed memory of this hour. Hence the personal element may and must be somewhat more prominent here, though always on the basis of the text, in constant reference to the kingdom of God, and therefore in a manner profitable also for the

others present. Formerly the family pride of many generations often expected that the marriage address should be somehow interlarded with references to the merits of all the more important members of the families, living and dead. To make oneself such a servant of men is utterly unworthy, and awakens the suspicion that it is being done to make sure of a more liberal marriage-fee. *We must also beware of hastily finding and praising a divine union in the way in which the betrothed pair became attached to one another.* If this appears to exist, it may be acknowledged with thanks to God, but not otherwise. If, for example, the marriage is entirely a marriage for money, and the pastor speaks, full of unction, of the purest affection which has prevailed, etc., he makes himself and his office ridiculous. In such a case let him rather emphasise the full seriousness of the responsibility which, by their vows, they are now assuming, and which they can never fully discharge without the aid of the divine Spirit. To praise the virtues of the bridal couple here, where it is done to their face, is more unbecoming than at the grave. On the other hand, we do not need to give expression to things, the mention of which hurts and embitters rather than edifying or improving. It would be better to do this with the parties by themselves than here in a public place.

*Texts.*—2 Cor. xiii. 11 (“Be perfected; be comforted; be of the same mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you”); 1 Tim. iv. 8 (“Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come”); Eph. v. 20–33 (“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also hath loved the Church,” etc.); Col. iii. 12–19 (“forbearing one another . . . and above all these things put on love,” etc.); Hos. ii. 19, 20 (“I will betroth thee unto me for ever”); John xx. 20 (“Peace be unto you”); Jos. xxiv. 15 (“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”); Ruth. i. 16, 17 (“Whither thou goest, I will go: and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God: where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me”); John xiii. 34 (“Love one another, as I have loved you”); Phil. ii. 1–4 (“Fulfil ye my joy that ye be of the same mind”); iv. 5–7 (“The Lord is at hand.

In nothing be anxious, etc. . . . and the peace of God shall guard your hearts and thoughts," etc.); Gen. xii. 2 ("I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing"). At the blessing of a jubilee married couple, Ps. cxvi. 12-14 ("What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me," etc.).

We pass over exceptional occasional addresses, such as *ordination addresses*, for which, see for example Martensen (German translation by Michelsen), *Hirtenspiegel* ["Mirror for Pastors"] (twenty ordination addresses), Gotha, 1872, ii. Sammlung.

(ε) *The Funeral Address* belongs to the most difficult, but also to the most beautiful and effective functions of the pastor. Its task is not to drive away the God-sent sorrow, but to purify and hallow it. It is, above all, desirable at the grave to make a *humble confession* of our frailty and mortality as connected with sin, and on the other hand a *profession of faith*, of our Christian hope which death cannot crush; and even, according to the circumstances a *thanksgiving* for what the departed one was to his loved ones, or to the Church or to his country. A formal description of him is only given when he was an important character in some particular sphere. But, even in the case of actual merit, let us not so much praise the man as God for what he wrought in the person in question and, through him, in the Church or the nation. The funerals of those who have died unconverted or were notoriously godless, may be availed of for serious warning to the survivors, but a judicial or reproachful condemnation of the deceased should be left to a higher judge. For "the funeral address should not cast a shadow on the dead, but rather throw light from a higher world upon the life of those who remain" (Palmer, S. 295). An exhortation to humble ourselves beneath the mighty hand of God: a reference to the love of God, which in the very hour of sorrow most of all produces thoughts of peace; to the wisdom of God which often, by means of one trouble, averts still greater losses, but which turns all things to good account for God's children, and finally makes all



things right for them; to His abundant grace, able to fill up every deficiency; to the faithfulness of God, supporting with special promises the widows and orphans; and especially to the Prince of Life, who has deprived death of its power, and who by His grave and resurrection has consecrated also the graves of His people, so that they slumber therein only as the seed-corns awaiting a happy spring-time; and, finally, a reminder of the necessity of being in readiness for our own uncertain end—such thoughts should, as a rule, form the *comforting and admonitory conclusion*.

Among the literature on the subject may be mentioned:—  
G. C. RIEGER, 34 *Ausgewählte Leichenpredigten* [“Selected Funeral Sermons”] neu herausgegeben, Stuttgart, 1856.  
SCHLEIERMACHER, *Rede am Grabe seines Nathanael* [“Address at the Grave of his Nathanael”] *Predigten*, iv. S. 836.

For difficult cases:—

HARLESS, *Grabrede bei Beerdigung eines im Duell Gebliebeneu* [“Funeral Address at the Burial of one who perished in a Duel”], Erlangen, 1841.

W. HOFFMANN'S *Sermon on Alexander von Humboldt*, 1859.

LIEBNER'S Funeral Address on Herbart, *Predigten*, S. 239, 1841.

RÜHLE, *Tod und Leben* [“Death and Life”] (thirty-two funeral addresses), 1877.

OHLY, *Dein Kind lebet* [“Thy child liveth”] (addresses at the graves of children), 1878.

OHLY, *Was soll ich predigen?* [“What shall I Preach?”] (a collection of addresses at the grave and funeral sermons in the case of deaths difficult to deal with), Wiesbaden, 1879.

FLOREY, *Biblische Wegweiser für geistliche Grabreden* [“Biblical Guide for Religious Addresses at the Grave”] (nine hundred Bible texts, etc.), 1886.

REDENBACHER, *Betrachtungen zu Leichenbegängnissen* [“Reflections for Funerals”], 3 Aufl. Ansbach, 1885.

The funeral address, which, historically, was transferred from the heathen custom of the pompous oratorical *laudationes* to the Christian Church, for a long time betrayed its origin only too clearly (cf. the intolerably bombastic funeral sermon of Ephraem the Syrian on Basil the Great). Especially at the burial of persons of the upper class, the

mistake has often been made in the last century and even in our own time; truly "whoever has heard or read many funeral sermons, knows where to find the noble office of preaching in its lowest depth of degradation and degeneration" (*Leselichen*, by Brandt and Hornung, Nürnberg, 1848, S. iv.).

Interested praise is all the more wrong since no place should remind us more of the truth that there is no respect of persons with God, than the grave, which outwardly equalises everything. The funeral address is a *confession*, and must therefore *study* above all things *strict truth*. By excessive praise the pastor loses the confidence of his people just as much as if, at the burial of godless men, he has not the courage to warn those who stand around him. This is his work in this place. In this way, in the name of the Church, he bears the necessary witness against the sins of the deceased. But he must not forget that the funeral service, according to the fundamental Protestant view, is a *service for the living*, and that, therefore, it is not his work to heap reproaches upon the dead, who has already found his Judge. The tone of *sympathy* with one whom he has immediately afterwards to commend in the liturgy to the grace and mercy of God, is more appropriate than that of judgment, which only causes bitterness, as the survivors are thus placed in the pillory. But if the preacher is not to condemn, so also *he must not too rashly pronounce saved*, even where there is well-grounded hope of the salvation of the departed, but should rather express this in the form of hope.

On the whole, *the survivors are to be chiefly kept in view* at the grave. An opportunity for doing good presents itself here to the pastor, such as he will not easily find otherwise. There the right words of comfort, of exhortation, or even of warning find the soil most loosened; there even frivolous minds are sobered and often really anxious about salvation; there, for many who avoid the church, it is often the only, the last moment in which the truth of God for once touches them. Woe to the preacher who allows such opportunities to pass away unused!

Only as a curiosity it may be mentioned that Theremin (*Demosthenes und Massillon*, S. 208) would like to see the funeral address intrusted not to clergymen, but a skilled diplomatist, or to a national historiographer. And why?

“Because the more honourable, the more moral the speaker is, the less is he fitted for it.” A greater misconception of the aim of the Church’s funeral address could not be found. As if the only matter of importance there was so to represent even the worst features by the most delicate art possible, that no one should take offence in any way! As if, as a rule, the principal point of view should not be that of warning and comfort for *the survivors*! “If the Church were to hand over her departed members to the diplomatists, she might just as well hand over their bodies altogether to anatomy!” (*Palmer*, S. 298). It is only a man who takes his ideal of preaching from Demosthenes who is capable of such errors!

That Roman Catholic rhetoricians and homilists, *e.g.* Gatti (*Vorträge über geistliche Beredsamkeit*, S. 152), should maintain that “funeral addresses require pathetic language, attractive figures of speech, carefully chosen expressions, variety of tropes, rich harmony of periods, and all that goes to make up the highest style of oratory”—is quite comprehensible, and belongs to the striving after effect, to the meretricious adornment of this Church, to which the simple force of the divine Word has long ceased to be a model.

#### 4. HOMILETICAL MATERIAL AS PARTLY DETERMINED BY THE INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY OF THE PREACHER.

The material of the particular sermon is determined not only by Scripture, Church custom, and the requirements of the people, but also by certain *subjective inclinations* of the preacher, arising from his individual gifts, his personal belief, his ecclesiastical and theological standpoint, and especially by his spiritual experience and practical wisdom, and depending also upon his stores of knowledge and his disposition at the time. Assuming that Christ Himself has, with His Word and Spirit, gained a place in the believing personality of the preacher, that his theological standpoint is not at variance with the inalienable basis of evangelical saving truth, that the proclamation of the fundamental facts and doctrines of salvation suffers no one-sided abridgment through his own personal study and

treatment of Scripture, whether on the historical, prophetic, or ethial and ascetic side—this individual share in determining the material of the sermon is thoroughly justifiable and necessary. As the preacher is bound to place all his energies, knowledge, external and internal experiences at the service of the divine Word and its exposition, the contents of the sermon must thus take an individual colour, and its whole arrangement and application will depend essential upon the preacher's personality. This subjectivity, however, must always find its limits, partly in the objective truth that we preach not ourselves (2 Cor. iv. 5), or the wisdom of man (1 Cor. ii. 4), and subordinate everything of our own knowledge and experience to the Scripture text, and use these only for its illustration—having regard, too, to the whole spirit and scope of the gospel—and partly in the Church's custom and the needs of the congregation. At the same time, the subjectivity should be its own limit, and should not, by unnatural *échiuffement*, forced exaggerations or excesses, or artificiality and borrowing from other sources in the desire to please, exceed the measure of one's own knowledge, experience, and powers, but should remain in itself, naturally, within its own actual possessions, in order that it may everywhere bear personal *testimony*, and that the wisdom that is from above may not lose its purity (Jas. iii. 17). Where our own knowledge and experience of the truth of a text are not adequate for the explanation of it, let us in our own chamber by prayer and meditation get our eyes opened (Jas. i. 5), and add to the old the new things which are necessary.

How very much the subjectivity of the preacher has a certain right in determining the material for the sermon, is abundantly shown by the history of preaching. That one and the same text should often receive from preachers of one and the same Church, even of one and the same theological school, *a totally different arrangement, treatment, and application*—whence does this arise except from the different

personality, gifts, stage of knowledge, and spiritual experience of the preacher? An old man will always preach somewhat differently from a young man, a healthy man somewhat differently from a sickly one, one who is struggling with external cares somewhat differently from one who is well-off, a fiery man differently from a man of calm temperament, a Peter and a Paul differently from a John and a James, one who, according to his theological gifts, attends more to the study of prophecy will preach differently from one who is more dialectically disposed, and so on, although in them all essentially the *one* spirit rules. This has never been, never will be otherwise, so long as God distributes diversities of gifts, nor should it be otherwise. For since the individual gifts and disposition, even the religious experience and life *proceed from God*, these therefore ought, both *by right and by obligation, to be reflected in preaching* as in everything else. And this applies also to the store of wisdom and general experience which the individual, according to his gifts and inclination, gradually acquires; this ought not to be repressed in preaching if it makes itself serviceable in other ways to the Word of God. This is indeed the glory of the Word of God, and one of the seals of its divinity, that it can flow through channels of infinite variety and yet remain the power of God and the life of God, that it can appear in the most diverse gifts, in the most diverse way, and yet manifest in each of them its divine kernel. This is "the wonderful thing about the gospel, that it excludes no gift from its service, but rather knows how to use all so that each bears in itself the whole and works for the whole. The simple good nature as well as the keen intellect; the realism which always devotes itself to the practical as well as the idealism nurtured in Christianity; the harmless repose of contemplation as well as rash, tempestuous zeal; the anxiously conscientious simplicity which only thinks itself secure when it can hold on with both hands, as well as the bold and powerful flight of fancy; the quiet, slow-going piety as well as youthful vivacity and activity; dull solemnity as well as natural cheerfulness; the power of the rebuke which smites to the ground as well as the delicate irony, the sarcasm which contains the salt of divine truth—all this has the right to make its power felt in the sermon" (*Palmer*, S. 533), but it must be used in the believing service of the gospel and of

the people, and must, of course, not transgress the limits of the dignified, the beautiful, the sacred solemnity demanded by public worship: and it must never assert itself for our own glory, but only for the honour of the Lord and the extension of His kingdom. Cf. Spurgeon, *Für freie halbe Stunden*, 1884, S. 134 ff: "The rough Cephas has his order and place, and is *neither* better nor worse, higher nor lower in the Word than the polished Apollos. It is true that *A.* distinguishes himself in his power of producing proofs; let him therefore argue, for he was made to convince men's intellect; but do not despise *B.* because his style is more expository, for he was sent not to argue but to teach. If all members of the body had the same office and the same gifts, what a miserable deformity that would be!" Hence we should not institute comparisons, but recognise the good in all true preachers of the gospel.

In short, subjectivity is justified when it places itself entirely at the service of the Lord, of His Word, His Spirit, His Church, and finds in this objective element its limitations and its guiding principle. Hence with some the keynote is predominantly *polemic*, they are always testifying against the folly, the over-wisdom, and self-seeking of the world, etc.; with others it is more *didactic*, with others more *ascetic*, insisting upon sanctification. One man likes to soar in thought to the eternal home, and seeks to implant the true longing for it in his hearers; the other enters, with Christian truth, the various elements of the present, of time, of human life, in order to realise here already the kingdom of God: one man seeks in impressive earnestness rather to shatter the throne of the self-deification of the *Ego*; the other seeks by words of kindly invitation to awaken even in the man of the world the longing for a Saviour. All this is justifiable, and therefore let us beware of regarding our own particular method as the only right one. But the best service will be rendered by the man who, at the right time and in the right place, can let the first or the second of all these, or the third or the fourth prevail, who, according to circumstances and needs, *can change his voice* (Gal. iv. 20), as he finds done by Christ and the apostles.

But from what has been already said, it follows that subjectivity is not justifiable when it dominates the divine Word, rejects one after another of the fundamental truths of the gospel according to the taste of the time, preaches

its own wisdom instead of Christ, submits to no doctrinal standard of a Church, or takes no account of Church custom, *e.g.* in the choice of texts for festival seasons, or instead of considering the needs of the people, follows only its individual fancies in Scripture.

Finally, however, subjectivity, in order to remain quite true and pure and to be able really to appear as a witness, *must be conscious of its own limitations*: nothing artificial, forced, exaggerated, is in place here,—no borrowing of foreign tinsel to cover one's own nakedness: no trying to appear different from what one is; no effort to give more than one really has or has received from the Lord; no trying to appear warm by forced declamation when our blood is really colder, and therefore more fitted for calm demonstration, etc. This is demanded by the spirit of truth and the character of preaching as a testimony. "For the wisdom that is from above is first pure" (Jas. iii. 17). But when we feel that our existing measure of the Spirit, and of knowledge and experience is not adequate for the statement of a Scripture truth, or that our method of preaching hitherto is not adequate for the conflict with an enemy or a hindrance to the kingdom of God, let us seek from above more strength, more light, more many-sidedness, more warmth and zeal, and even more coolness, but all the greater sharpness, in short, more new and stronger armour of light! And, generally, let it not be forgotten that *no personality is perfect, that it must* always grow and increase, and that even the treasure of our knowledge and experience must always increase in order that with the old the new may not be wanting, and that we may not get preached-out and poor!

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE RHETORICAL FORM AND DELIVERY OF THE SERMON.

THE subject-matter to be proclaimed and testified being, in general, fixed for the preacher, the general rules of textual exposition and application having become clear to him, and his text being chosen both with regard to time and need, and also his own inclination and conscience, we have finally to deal with the *form* into which this subject-matter is to be brought, with the *rhetorical form* of the sermon, as essentially based on the difference between ecclesiastical and political oratory (see Prolegomena, 1 (*b*)), and specifically based on Church custom; and also with its delivery. Hence there results for the formal part of homiletic the twofold task of laying down the fundamental rules (1) for the rhetorical form of the sermon, and (2) for its delivery. Under the first head we shall treat of (*a*) the *theme* and the *division*, and how to find and formulate these; (*b*) the *amplification* (introduction, particular amplification, conclusion); and (*c*) the *diction*; and under the second, of the external aspects of the delivery, whether it is to be extempore or to be read, of voice, enunciation, bodily attitude, and action.

#### I. THE RHETORICAL FORM OF THE SERMON.

*General.*—As the text itself, whether small or large, should be an independent connected whole, so, above all, the sermon must not be a mere aggregate of all kinds of opinions, no matter how true and profitable they may be,



but a discourse, *i.e.* a *connected, organically arranged whole*, which expands indeed into a variety of thoughts, but is bound together into a unity by means of one leading fundamental thought and one dominant fundamental aim. This somewhat artificial form of the sermon, which always necessitates *meditation*, presupposes that the fundamental thought or thoughts have been discovered in the text and grouped together in unity under one *theme*, and, further, that the expansion of this unity into a variety of thoughts, or the *amplification* of the theme in several parts, shall be arranged in distinct logical sequence. If this strictly arranged connection of thoughts into a unity is much more important in Christian congregations, accustomed to it by long ecclesiastical usage, than in mission-preaching, and requires greater attention, on the other hand it must not be overlooked that the sermon, in amplification of the subject of the text, in enforcing its individual elements, and therefore also to some extent in the arrangement of them, should *more freely*, and must not therefore, so far as Church custom allows without giving offence, be dependent in detail upon too many formal rules, if the spiritual force is not to be somewhat extinguished and the evangelical freedom and vivacity of the discourse somewhat repressed.

Only the last point here requires explanation: all the rest is obvious. There are people who are horrified if we speak of liberty for the sermon as regards its form. This liberty has certainly its limits, which are not to be transgressed, in Church custom and dignity, above all in the necessary unified order, the clear connection, the proportionate distribution of the matter over the different parts, the subordination of the whole to *one* sacred aim, to which the progress of the thought must absolutely yield—especially in congregational preaching: whereas in missionary preaching, on account of the questions and objections which are often interjected, a freer dwelling upon the truths of the Christian faith or even a digression into details, is often scarcely to be avoided. *But even the restriction of homiletic freedom by formal rules and laws has its definite limits; and*

it is this which many homiletes overlook, who, exaggerating greatly the value of formal rules, often take a petty delight in laying down as many minute little rules as possible, to tie to the post every little branch which tries to sprout freely. In opposition to such it is necessary to recall *what instruction the Lord gave His disciples for preaching*. The *what*, the subject of preaching, was told them exactly; the *form*, into which they were to put this subject, was left to the Spirit which filled them. To preach the Word in season and out of season, namely, the mystery of godliness, that God was manifest in the flesh—this Paul inculcates upon Timothy seriously enough; but prescription of form for this preaching he gives him none! This *one* great fact is sufficient to make us distrustful of homiletes who lay such infinite stress on the form and are inexhaustible in their inventions of homiletic rules or artifices, but insist very little upon personal belief and upon the right spirit. And it is, in general, no good sign of the condition of our Church that *the formal part of homiletic often quite outweighs the material*; where the *Spirit*, personal faith and zeal are wanting, there rules must all the more be used as crutches! No; *where the right spirit and faith are, we need not be too anxious about the form*; they make for themselves, where necessary, the proper channels! How many preachers there are of real power and unction, who, even though observing certain general rules which Church custom carried with it, nevertheless have gone their own way with regard to form, and yet each went the right way! Diversity of gifts—and yet *one* Spirit; and therefore also many forms of statement and communication, and yet *one* truth. According to many homiletes of our time, it appears as if our modern form of sermon, with subject and statement of divisions, and our present laborious form of amplification were the only correct, reasonable, and effective ones. And they certainly are relatively good, better than many which have preceded them; we should have certainly been able to learn much from the mistakes of previous centuries, and, even in regard to the formal aspect of homiletics, to have lopped off many an excrescence, and to have thrown overboard many an unnecessary piece of lumber in the shape of repressive forms. But we should not seek to foster the idea that the present method is the *non plus ultra* of perfection, so that we do not overestimate the form, and forget that *the holy*

*Scriptures remain* our eternal pattern, that we have only to *follow* in our preaching, with spiritually free appropriation and reproduction, what Christ and the apostles preached before us. *Our method has not been, and could not be, the first form of preaching; who knows whether it will be the last!* Thus also Kübel on "The Biblical Pattern for Preaching" (*Zeitschrift für lutherische Theologie*, 1873, Heft ii. S. 230): "Our customary form of preaching has not the smallest right to declare itself as absolutely valid, it cannot, at least, be the only true one: on the contrary, it must have at least its constant corrective in the simple biblical mode of speech."

This is far from implying that the Word is to be preached with the shallow, planless prattle of people who pride themselves on their gift of speech, and build upon it; on the contrary, even we insist on thoroughly diligent meditation, clear understanding of the subject which is to be preached on, and of the definite result which it is desired to produce in the hearers, a steady aim at the goal to which we want to lead them; for how can the arrow stick which is shot in such a general way into the air? We, too, insist on a conscious, orderly progress in the development of the thought, and, therefore, also on theme and division. But, in harmony with Stier, S. 230 ff., we should like to *utter a warning against overestimating this form of the sermon*, against making these scholastic forms—which in most cases are still necessary for the time—into "Spanish boots"<sup>1</sup> for the free expansion of the mind. We would have it considered that, if apostles and prophets look down upon our ink and paper, upon our little essays learned by heart, they certainly do not recognise our modern mode of preaching as a progress compared with theirs, but will rather pity the slender mental capacity of modern preachers, which renders necessary at present such tedious, laborious, scholastically-regulated work! Similarly, William Arthur, in his *Tongue of Fire*, p. 177, says that our preaching from a manuscript is not scriptural and pentecostal. Cf. Öttinger (*Ehmann*, S. 401): "It is well to think out one's subject beforehand, but it is *restraint* to bind oneself to a written form of sermon. In the present day we must know how to combine both." It is a noteworthy fact that many who at the beginning lay the greatest stress on a form fashioned as

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* instruments of torture or repression. [Trans.]

much as possible by rules, and take great pains in elaborating their work, preach more simply as they grow older,—and not to the injury of the mind and its working!

Our *verbatim* preparation and memorising does not really correspond to the *highest* work of the free, living discourse. It has its origin in our *weakness* and is, on that account, necessary for the time, and beginners should by no means dispense with it, say for the first ten years of their work as preachers. But it is an error to repress the *impulse to extempore speech* which dwells in every living, Spirit-anointed preacher, or the desire to interweave new passages, new thoughts which have only occurred to him in the pulpit through mental activity, and to cripple it by forcing it into the yoke of the severest, minutest prescriptions of form, or to afford it no scope by absolutely binding the preacher to what has been previously thought-out and written. “*Quench not the Spirit!*” It will always be a higher form of preaching when a man, by a thorough immersion of his whole soul, in humble faith, in the truth which he is to proclaim, and by placing himself entirely and unreservedly under the direction of the Lord and His Spirit, with genuine inspiration, not artificially forced, *draws from the gift of grace at the moment*, and casts the fire which streams from above, in clear and kindling sparks, into the hearts of his hearers! Hence the not infrequent occurrence now, that as a rule we come nearer to extempore speech as our own faith becomes more living and the Spirit becomes more powerful in us!

Kübel (*ut supra*, S. 247): “We should like biblical preaching, above all, to be considered as setting us free from the ban of rules, where these are likely to hinder the Spirit. But since it is also possible to preach in accordance with the biblical spirit and yet at the same time within the rules prescribed by the art of oratory, so far as these are not made a confining fence—we therefore demand, on the one hand, that neither Church authority nor the science of homiletic should make an obligatory law of something which is not to be found in the Bible, and, on the other hand, that the evangelical preacher should in the first degree keep strictly to the biblical model and to the rules of art only so far as he is not hindered by the latter in following the former.”

(a) *General considerations on the two different Methods of treating the Text.*

We must first of all consider in the text, what sort of method it has in itself, whether it is only *diegetic*, having a symmetrical progress, and, therefore, according to the method of patristic preaching, more suited for a homily, or whether its parts group themselves around a general dominating central thought, whether it does not indeed bear its theme on its face from the beginning, *e.g.* Psalm xxiii. or the Epistles for the 19th, 20th, and 21st Sundays after Trinity, and whether, therefore, the exposition also has to subordinate everything to this central point. In accordance with this, either the simple analytical method (*methodus naturalis* or *analytica*), or the artificial synthetic method (*methodus artificialis* or *synthetica*), with theme and division, will commend itself as the more appropriate.

The former method treats the text, as such, as a unity directly given, and proceeds from this to the details, so that the obvious succession of sentences or clauses in the text is also the order and connection of the discourse. The synthetic treatment, on the other hand, seeks first, through a connected view of all the individual parts of the text, one single thought, and states it as a theme, the subject of which then directs the grouping of the whole and seeks, in logical sequence, its statement and organic expression in the particular elements of the text, a development which may in its turn become quite similar to the analysis, or may even transpose the sections of the text. The *analytic* method, which does not usually exclude the synthetic summarising in a theme, will commend itself in every case where the text maintains an *equal* weight in all its extent, and forms in the simple sequence of the thoughts themselves a connected organism, in every case where "the *then* of the history of revelation is to retain its immediate effect, or the *original* mode of expression of the doctrinal passage is seen to be the most effective, and therefore not

to be altered" (Nitzsch, 93), thus especially in larger sections from the *narrative of the Passion*, and then in the Beatitudes, the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, the parables, or in the elements of the idea of virtue (2 Pet. i. 5, etc.), the love of the world (1 John ii. 16), the superiority of love (1 Cor. xiii.), in historical examples such as Heb. xi., in the sequence of elements in the development of a prophecy (Matt. xxiv.), and generally in the case of lengthy passages, where, on account of the wealth of their contents, explanation must predominate. The *synthetic* method, on the other hand, commends itself where the various elements of the text are of *unequal* importance, where "the *now* of suitability and applicability" of a historical or doctrinal passage has chiefly to be considered, and the sermon, generally, has to form a more systematic and independent whole. It is thus in the majority of the Epistles and Gospels for Sundays, in which the synthetic process is the more requisite, the more difficult the discovery of the unity in the variety appears to be. For the rest, each of these methods, the more it seeks to guard itself from one-sidedness and to avoid the dangers peculiar to it, will be all the more compelled to *blend itself with the other*, in order that it may not become un-homiletical: the former that it may not sink down into popular exegesis, the latter, that it may not become elaborated abstraction or dry systematising and treatment.

Cf. Nitzsch, S. 92-97; and Diegel, on the development of the analytical and synthetical form of sermon in the Lutheran Church of Germany, *Denkschrift des Friedberger Seminars*, 1886.

The *Beatitudes* of the Sermon on the Mount, for example, are symmetrically progressive, and are therefore to be *analytically* treated: anyone who takes them *together* as a text will not be able easily to subordinate all the rest to one; they form a gradation of blessedness, the stages of which are equally important. Nay, even if we take them separately as texts (which is to be recommended for beginners), every transposition of the clauses will only result

in confusion: "Blessed are" must sound out first, then the necessary ethical quality of the man must follow, and, finally, the promise must conclude. The bitter in the middle: the sweet at the beginning; the glory afterwards!

In expansions such as, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," the symmetrical progress, which must on no account be altered, is given of itself, so that we only require to follow it analytically. *The homiletic art must not be self-willed here* and try to make or arrange things better, even if occasionally there seems a reason for transposing the existing order, but must accept the textual arrangement which already exists. So, for example, 2 Tim. ii. 22, "Flee youthful lusts, but follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart"; here the objects of Christian effort are already presented in an orderly progress.

But the analytical method is essentially to be chosen, not only where the text is itself presented as a connected organism in the sequence of its parts, but also in every case where the principal matter is to understand the "*time at which*," as well as to translate into the present, *e.g.* in the case of the narrative of the Passion (which, of course, is not excluded); where in doctrinal texts the *original* form of expression cannot be given up without losing something of the effect; and *generally in every case where the text would only lose by transposition of its clauses*. How, for example, could much change be made in the parables? We must follow them step by step, and all the more that the individual elements are usually of equal importance. Still more daring would be a transposition in the case of *prophetic pictures of the future*. The less the commentators are here agreed about the sequence of the elements of development, for the *locus de novissimis* is still very doubtful, the more necessary it is to adhere strictly to the sequence of the text. There is no doubt that in general the analytic homily has a greater claim than is now usually conceded to it: Tholuck (*Vorwort*, S. xxi.) plainly states that the *freer homily* as Chrysostom employed it is the form which best corresponds to his requirements as a preacher, and in which he would be best able to produce result: that he moves under constraint in the customary synthetic form. Especially distasteful to him is the violence which is often done by the

latter to the connection of Scripture passages. He thinks that it is with the preacher who labours at the artificial framework of the sermon as with the poet who has not facility in rhyme: it takes the bloom off the mind!

In other texts, on the other hand, a *predominant central thought* presents itself,—to which the rest serves as introduction, fuller development, or consequence, and is therefore subordinate,—which accordingly must form the principal subject of the thesis. Here the *synthetic* method naturally suggests itself as the one to be chiefly followed. It may be, indeed, that in the very first words of the text the theme, the central subject of all that follows, is clearly expressed, as in the Epistles mentioned: Eph. iv. 22–28, “That *ye put away*, as concerning your former manner of life, the *old man*, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man; . . . putting away falsehood; . . . be ye angry and sin not,” etc. The theme is clear: The putting away of the old man; and the several parts in which it consists are synthetically enlarged on. Or v. 15–21, “Look therefore *carefully how ye walk*, not as unwise, but as wise; . . . be ye not foolish; . . . be not drunken with wine; . . . giving thanks always for all things; . . . subjecting yourselves to one another.” Theme: Christian carefulness of walk. Or vi. 10–17, “Finally, be strong in the Lord; . . . put on the whole armour of God”—then the description of this armour, “having girded your loins with truth, . . . taking up the shield of faith,” etc. Theme: Strength in the Lord or the Christian’s armour. Similarly, Ps. xxiii., John x., “The Good Shepherd,” and others. In very short, sententious texts, indeed, it may often happen that *text and theme entirely coincide*, as Luke x. 42, “One thing is needful”; or the greeting, “Peace be unto you”: or Luke xix. 10, “The Son of Man—a Seeker and Saviour of the Lost”; or John viii. 12, “I am the Light of the World”; vi. 35, “The Bread of Life,” etc. Here it is wrong to elaborate any further.

If, however, we leave a text as it is and yet have a thesis, if we develop successively the elements contained in the existing form, and yet are able at the same time to proceed quite systematically and synthetically, what is the result? *That the two methods are to be separated only ideally, but not in practical application.* Even the analytic method of exposition which follows the text, may have a thesis and



divisions and yet follow the text verse by verse, and therefore remain essentially analytic. Analysis does not exclude divisions, and, similarly, synthesis does not exclude the analytic process. We may formulate a thesis from a text and construct correct divisions, and yet follow the text analytically step by step. The question, therefore, in practice is not an *either—or*, but only a *more or less*.

(b) *Special Statement of the Synthetic Form of Discourse.*

(a) THESIS AND DIVISION.

*Historical origin of the thematic form of sermon.*—Although the first beginnings of the thematic mode of preaching reach back to the time when homiletics was in its bloom in the Early Greek Church and to Augustine, when, instead of expounding a book of Scripture continuously in homilies in the older method of Origen, they undertook to speak on a definite doctrinal or ethical point, yet the real originator of the modern thematic preaching—the peculiarity of which lies in the rhetorically-formed, pregnant statement of the subject and in the immediate statement also of the division—is *Scholasticism*. Out of the mass of ideas and problems into which it divided the material of the text, and on which it then proposed a series of *quaestiones* in order to answer these forthwith by quotations from Scripture and the Fathers, towards the end of the Scholastic period only a few of these were retained, and, finally, only one leading *quaestio* (thus in Gabriel Biel (*d.* 1495) and Olivier Maillard the younger (*d.* 1502)). These *quaestiones* are preceded by a “Thema,” as a general statement of the subject which is to be treated, but signifying at that time a *single proposition* taken from the Lesson [pericopa], which served as a text—not indeed really for the sermon, but for a lengthy exordium. This text-proposition of the exordium afterwards gave its name of “thema” to that which appeared, in the sequel, as

*quaestio*, and which appears already in the later Scholastic preachers, and still more in the Protestant preachers since the time of the Reformation as the *doctrina* or *locus communis*, deduced from the Lesson for doctrine and application.

In opposition to this, Luther, in 1520, stated it as the distinctive feature of his mode of preaching, that he preached without any "thema" ("thema" = the proposition of the exordium), and hence the homily form predominates in his works. On the other hand, a thematic announcement of the subject appeared in the Protestant Church more definitely and regularly through the encouragement which Melancthon gave it. Even in his *Elementa Rhetorices*, with the old divisions of a discourse: *exordium*, *narratio*, *confirmatio*, *refutatio*, *peroratio*, the *narratio* is supplied by the *thema*, by a *propositio* or *summa rei*. But the growth of the thematic form of sermon was much more assisted by his *Annotations* on the Gospels, 1545, in which he mentioned, under the head of each "gospel," the *loci communes* which might be preached on. Arsatius Seehofer, not Schofer, as Lentz, Harnack, and others have it (*Enarrationes evangeliorum dominicalium*, 1544), endeavoured to formulate these *loci communes* more fully, and to give them oratorical finish. The didactic form of preaching then necessary, and the only too polemical method which succeeded it, gladly retained this singling out of the doctrinal points, *loci* (cf. the *local* method of dogmatic theology); hence it came that in the Protestant Church thesis and divisions continued for a long time to be constructed with scholastic Latin terminology.

Even Pietism, emphasising as it did the practical soteriological side, and that of applied ethics as well as the doctrinal aspect did not alter this, for Spener, who, with careful conscientiousness, seeks to exhaust as far as possible the doctrinal and ethical contents of the text, laid the greatest stress on complete and systematic knowledge of doctrine, and, in order to make of his sermons a continuous

doctrinal course, was often obliged to lay hold of a secondary point in the text of the Lesson [*pericopa*] for the development of a particular doctrine—for which a special “thema” was all the more indispensable. The Wolffian method of definition and demonstration, which became naturalised in the pulpit in the succeeding period, could just as little dispense with that form, for that which was to be demonstrated had first to be propounded as a thesis. Even Rationalism had special reasons for cultivating this form, since it wanted to use the thesis to inculcate more firmly its shallow dogmas and therewith to enlighten the people, and treated with special preference very particular or very general subjects, often far removed from the centre of saving truth; whilst even men of a quite different theological school and of the greatest independence, such as Konrad Rieger, Ötinger, Schleiermacher, Cl. Harms, Stier, Beck, and almost all more recent preachers until now, adhered to this Church custom, without fearing any damage to their right of freedom.

Melanchthon is usually regarded as the originator of the now prevalent form of sermon, and it is certainly true that he contributed largely to bring it into force. But the roots of this plant reach much further back. Whereas Origen’s mode of preaching expounds the text verse by verse, the leading orators of the *Early Greek Church*, Basil, the two Gregory’s, Ephraem the Syrian, Chrysostom, began in consequence of the demands of special occasions (induction and farewell sermons, funeral addresses, eulogies, etc.) to treat of a definite doctrinal or ethical subject. Similarly Augustine (cf. above, *Prolegomena*, 1, on the meaning of the homily, etc.), e.g. on the day of the execution of John the Baptist: “Admonet nos locus iste, ut propter vitam et mores vestros aliquid vobis *de juramento tractemus*”; and so also we see in his sermons *de tempore, de sanctis* the original purpose of exposition accompanied by a second, independent purpose, the treatment of a definite subject or theme. A further part in the fixing of this custom was contributed by Synodal decrees from the time of Charlemagne (e.g. that of the Synod of Tours, 813), which prescribe for preachers the principal

themes, *quibus subjecti erudiantur*; for example, *de fide catholica*; *de perpetua retributione bonorum et aeterna damnatione malorum*, etc. Here, however, the *thema* is still a quite general statement of an article of faith, not the rhetorically finished, short, pregnant statement, immediately broken up into divisions, which we understand by it.

It is rather to *Scholasticism* that we owe this modern mode of arrangement. A "Tractatus de modo concionandi," which is ascribed to Thomas Aquinas, but which scarcely had the angelic doctor as its author, definitely distinguishes between *thema*, *praefatio*, *divisio*, and *subdivisio* (but *thema* = exordium). The tendency to distinguish, to systematise, which dominates the Scholastic treatment of doctrine, was introduced also into preaching. The material of the text was divided into different ideas and sentences, and problems and *quaestiones* were proposed on these, which were also then immediately answered. These gradually became fewer, until finally there was only *one* leading *quaestio*. This was the state of things towards the close of the Scholastic period, although even in the case of the Franciscan Berthold (*d.* 1272), we often find in his German sermons for the people a thesis with divisions formulated in the most popular fashion, just in the interest of popularity, intelligibility, and retentivity. But in the distinctive school-sermons (not popular sermons) of Scholasticism the *quaestiones* are preceded by a *thema*, *i.e.* a sentence taken from the lesson [gospel or epistle] for the day, which usually serves as a text for the longer exordium, and then gives its name "thema" to what formerly appeared as *quaestio*, and therefore to the whole problem which is to be discussed. This is the origin of the thematic form of sermon.

Reuchlin, in his *Liber congestorum de arte praedicandi*, 1504, has not, indeed, the name *thema*, but he has a chapter *de divisione*, and a later one, *de locis communibus*.

Luther wanted to bid farewell to this form of preaching, as to Scholasticism generally, and to preach *sine ullo themate*, *i.e.* without long introduction and exordium. He went generally straight to his subject. His aim was, above all, the explanation of the text, the inculcating of some leading truths, and hence the form of homilies which prevails with him. Yet even in his works there are sermons in which we read: "We learn from this firstly—secondly—thirdly," without these points, however, being announced at the

beginning. The latter, however, is done by others, *e.g.* Matthesius, Veit Dietrich: "This 'gospel' has three principal parts—the chief stress is laid on the second of these, and therefore we will now deal specially with this part."

Melanchthon, however, did most to naturalise this form in Protestant preaching, though he himself hardly ever preached, but only delivered Latin addresses on religion to his students, partly, however, preparing written sermons for others, and partly giving homiletic directions in various writings. His classically cultured mind impelled him, by means of a form modelled after classical oratory, to purify Protestant preaching from the tastelessness and crudity of the Roman Catholic preaching of that time. In his rhetoric he now Christianises the ancient rhetoric, applies the rhetorical rules to preaching, and takes his examples only from holy Scripture. In the parts of the discourse, the place of the *narratio* is taken by the *thema*, a doctrinal point of the Christian faith, called also *propositio*, *summa rei*, a short summary of the subject it refers to. Melanchthon expressly blames many preachers for failing in proper diligence, because often *non proponunt summam ejus rei, de qua dicituri sunt; ea res facit, ut auditor incertus nusquam sciat, quid expectare debeat*. Moreover, as Luther wrote his *Kirchenpostille* ["Sermons on the Gospels and Epistles of the Church Year"] to assist preachers who did not yet know how to help themselves, so Melanchthon wrote his *Annotationes* on the "Gospels," that the clergy might learn to make *themata*. He took from the "Gospels" some *loci communes*, *e.g.* Matt. xi.: "Quinque sunt loci: testimonium doctrinae, de scandalo crucis, de officio et constantia concionatoris, de officio Johannis et collatione Johannis et Christi, de discrimine vet. et novi testamenti." Then came Seehofer and others, and showed how these dry and general doctrinal points should also be definitely embraced in the *thema* and formulated somewhat oratorically, and how sometimes merely a leading fundamental idea might be given in it, and sometimes a predicate also joined to this subject, *e.g.* "lex non justificat."

Thus gradually the modern custom arose. And in the subsequent period each school had its reasons for not departing from this custom. Dogmatists, Polemicists, Pietists, Rationalists were all able to use this custom for their special purposes. One might have expected of Pietism particularly that it would have gone back from the stiff scholastic forms,

which would not lay aside the Latin terminology even in presence of the congregation, to a simple edifying mode of preaching. But it did not do so, chiefly because even Spener laid so great a stress on doctrine, and the emphasised doctrinal points were more easily retained in memory by means of thesis and divisions. Besides, Spener had to rely, though in a freer fashion, upon the lesson- [pericopae] texts, the compulsory use of which he did not approve, in order to be able, as he wished, to make a doctrinal course out of them. This would not have been possible with the homily form, and hence the thematic form came to his assistance, because he was thus able to make a secondary point the starting-point for a doctrine or a *thema*. But if such reasons as the Polemicists, Rationalists, etc. had for retaining the thematic form have disappeared for us, should we nevertheless still adhere to it?

The question, whether the thematic form of sermon is still to be retained, is variously answered. Three reasons are principally urged against it. *In the first place*, it is said that preaching *loses thereby its character as exposition of Scripture*, that violence is done to the text by most "theses," and that the right form is rather the homily. But the sermon is, as a matter of fact, not merely exposition of Scripture, but also a discourse for the purpose of applying the contents of Scripture to the present, and hence a more or less artificially constructed whole, the inner connection of which may and ought, if possible, to be different from the sequence of elements in the text. *Secondly*, This being granted, it is objected that the ancient classical orators show that even *for an elaborate address the statement of thesis and divisions is not necessary*, that on the contrary it is rhetorically more correct and more effective not to reveal beforehand the result of a sequence of thought. But in the case of the old classical oration, either the aim of the orator was known beforehand, and hence no thesis was necessary, or else in the gradual unfolding of the orator's purpose there was a tendency of political advocacy, aiming at the excitement of the emotions and passions, of patriotism, sympathy, etc., essentially

different from the aim of Christian preaching, and hence that comparison is not appropriate. Besides, the thesis can be so stated that it is not an anticipation which weakens the effect, but rather a preparation for what follows, which really excites interest. *Thirdly*, If it is said that this usage is *superfluous*, because every hearer perceives for himself whether the discourse is about faith, or love, or the last judgment, this is applicable only to abstract general themes, which are homiletically objectionable, because they weaken the concrete elements of the text instead of concentrating them in one dominant thought, as in a focus, the expression of which is in itself edifying, and should have the effect of shedding light on the whole text. But this is seldom, of itself, clear to every hearer.

On objection 1.—We gladly concede to the homily its rights, and, further, admit that there are texts for which it is better suited than the thematic form. But the *error* in the first objection is the *fundamental assumption that the sermon is only exposition of Scripture*. It is more than this: it is the application of the contents of Scripture to the present, and that, too, in the form of a *discourse*, and this implies a systematic, artificial construction which needs not to be bound under all circumstances to the sequence of the verses [or clauses]; for its principal object is not really the explanation of these verses, but the implanting the truth which they contain in the hearts of the people, in the present life of the congregation both individually and as a whole. And if this object is more effectively attained by an order and connection which deviates from the sequence of the verses, the preacher should not be bound to regard that order, as he is not bound at all to the letter, but to the spirit of Scripture, and this, as the Spirit of the Lord, is a spirit of liberty.

On objection 2.—The comparison with classical orators is not appropriate. When Cicero speaks before the Court *pro Roscio Amerino*, *pro Marcello*, or *in Verrem*, the thesis, *i.e.* the subject, purport, and tendency of his oration are known from the first. Similarly, our advocates do not require to mention thesis and divisions, although they occasionally mention the

latter for the sake of clearness and retentivity. But when in an ancient oration, say a political one, the purpose is not clear from the beginning, but is gradually disclosed, this is really intentional; the object is to rouse the people to a prompt decision, to evoke, by gradual exciting of passion, some decision of the people or of the Senate. This is not held good in Christian sermons. Here the object is not so much an immediate persuasion. Here it is not so important to produce oratorical effect by the distribution of catchwords and battle-cries, by using as a lever some specially effective points, but rather by sincere, simple manifestation of the truth in serious, impressive, but pure language, not striving after effect, to let the light fall into men's hearts and consciences, whether they will receive it or not; the result is to be left to God, and not forced after the fashion of an advocate.

It is also untrue to say, if the sequence of thought is anticipated by thesis and divisions, that this is a *lessening of the oratorical effect*, that the cream is already skimmed off (cf. Schleiermacher, *Praktische Theologie*, S. 251: "Such a forecast of the plan is utterly opposed to the artistic character of the discourse"). *On the contrary*, the short statement of the division should be so made that the interest is only properly aroused by it, that the people are the more curious about what is coming.

On objection 3.—How far, finally, the thesis is from being *superfluous*, we shall see at once from the positive reasons for the thematic form. Only quite general theses, e.g. "We shall speak of the centurion at Capernaum" or "we shall deal with Christ's ascension," etc., are superfluous; anyone perceives that himself. But these theses, even on homiletic grounds, are quite objectionable and often betray the laziness of the preacher, who would not give himself the trouble of a more precise statement. No section of the Bible contains merely such abstract ideas or quite general allusions, but the general in some kind of concrete form and reference; and a proper, good thesis *must distinctly contain this concrete reference*, must find, indeed, the real centre of the thought, but must express it in the particular form indicated by the text. It must be in itself an edifying thought, in which the hearer will find something which helps him to a thorough understanding of the text, and at the same time to the application of it to his own life, with which therefore



the complete impression of the sermon is connected. This is something which most of our hearers would not arrive at so easily, which they accept thankfully as a guide, and which is equally in the interest of the preacher himself, as we shall see presently.

If, then, it is also admitted that it is one thing to cherish and *carry out* our design and quite another thing to announce it in the introduction, and that only the first of these is an absolutely essential requisite, the second being only a conditional one, not always necessary for quite short texts, themselves thematic, or for a continuous exposition of Scripture in week-day sermons, not even advisable for the occasional address,—since this, besides its general, edifying import has also a personal and immediate reference, which it would be in bad taste to include in the thesis,—yet the general *custom of stating the divisions is well grounded*. It is partly in the interest of the *hearers*, whose attention is thereby aroused and whose comprehension of the whole, as well as retention of the details, is and must be made infinitely easier, and to whom generally a genuine service is rendered if they know at what part of the way they happen to be; partly in the interest of the *preacher*, for whom this custom is a wholesome discipline and check against all unregulated arbitrariness and repetition, and at the same time a real assistance to memorising; partly, finally, in the interest of the observance of *divine worship* itself, from which it removes every appearance of arbitrariness and unpreparedness of speech,—for which a good plan, containing concrete truth, has in itself an instructive, rousing, and edifying effect, and for which the thesis gives as it were a watchword which collects into one focus the thoughts of all the worshippers. Hence this custom prevails to-day universally in all the Protestant Churches (although not in all the sects).

To carry out a definite plan holds good unconditionally: to announce it beforehand is only a conditional rule (Kübel, *ut supra*, S. 248: “The announcement of theme and divisions

must not be an unconditional requirement"). We may exempt from this announcement, according to circumstances, very short texts, which as such are themselves theses, and therefore do not require the statement of a special thesis,—texts which we need only follow almost word for word in order to get their separate parts, and in which therefore the analytic and synthetic form of sermon, the thematic form and the homily, are combined. Even then, however, it will be of service *to repeat the sentence as a thesis*, and perhaps to say that we shall follow it step by step, so that the hearers may know what is the thread of the discourse. Even then the possibility always remains open to us of formulating a good thesis, *e.g.* Ps. ii. 11, "Serve the Lord with fear, rejoice with trembling"—The golden rule of life for the Christian: Rejoice with trembling. 1 Cor. vii. 23, "Ye are bought with a price: become not bondservants of men"<sup>5</sup>—The apostolic warning: become not servants of men. Ps. xxxix. 9, "I will be still and open not my mouth; Thou wilt make it right" [Luther's version]—the best resolution under divine chastisement: (1) to be still; (2) to hope in faith (Thou wilt make it right). In such cases we must decide according to our own need and according to homiletic taste.

*Week-day sermons* are also, in some circumstances, exempt from the thematic form, since they often expound a book continuously, as homilies, when they have more the character of a Bible-reading, although here also the interest is generally aroused and the solemnity increased if the preacher divides the particular passage into definite sections, and indicates the way along which he wants to lead his hearers.

It is *not*, however, *at all advisable* to state a thesis for an *occasional* address. It is true that unity of thought must be insisted on even for this, and it is a prominent fault of many funeral and marriage addresses that their material is arranged anyhow, without real unity. But a thesis is not suitable for them, because they have to refer, not only to the general, but to the personal and temporal. The thesis would *either have to disregard this personal element entirely* and only express the general, but then it would be one-sided, embracing only one part of the address, and it would *soon be repeated*, so that one funeral address would appear tolerably like another, because the general Christian words of exhortation and comfort are almost always the same: or, on the

other hand, the thesis would have to *include and state the personal element also*: then, indeed, variety would be secured, but it would not be at all in good taste; the personal and universal, placed side by side in one sentence, or thought, would strike everyone as an absurd combination.

With this exception, we adhere to the thematic form and to the announcement of the thesis, for the sake of the people, the preacher, and the service.

*A great service is thereby rendered to the hearers*, most of whom have minds by no means logical or dialectically trained. It is wearisome for the hearer if he never knows at what point of the way he is. Without this handle he might indeed listen attentively to the sermon to the end, and perhaps afterwards recall some particular parts of it, but the sermon, as a whole, would be lost for the great majority of hearers. Besides, the attention is aroused by the very announcement of the plan, and is also much more likely to be retained throughout if the hearer observes how, according to the plan, he is carried on step by step. Even for pedagogic reasons, this custom commends itself, for by means of it a catechetical element is retained in the sermon.

For the *preacher* this custom is a *wholesome self-discipline*; for not only does it compel him to think out thoroughly and arrange logically the material for his sermon, and to formulate carefully the main outlines of the plan in regard to language and expression; it is also a wholesome check against arbitrary *digression*, and especially against wearisome *repetitions*, into which speakers who are not thoroughly prepared so easily fall. It has also its reward, in the fact that it affords to his mind the most powerful support in accurate memorising.

Finally, this custom possesses also *for the whole service* a value "peculiar to itself" (Nitzsch), because it removes every appearance of unpreparedness and arbitrariness of speech, and thus the service must plainly gain in dignity and solemnity. If, in the statement of the plan, the hearer has evidence *that the preacher addresses himself well-prepared to his discourse*, the very labour and serious meditation of the preacher which appear in this, are in themselves *an element which heightens solemnity and devotion*; whereas if the hearer, because he does not hear any plan announced, asks himself whether the preacher is not perhaps shaking the whole thing out of his sleeve, this at once considerably

hinders his devotion and edification. Why should he give such serious attention<sup>1</sup> to something about which the preacher has not given himself much trouble? A *good division*, on the other hand, *in itself* suggests to the hearer *something profitable* to think about, and makes the effect of the worship *more lasting*. For since the thesis is, as it were, the Sunday motto for believing Christians, the echo of which abides with them the whole day and throughout the week, it helps them to keep in *constant remembrance* what they heard and received, which would be infinitely difficult for them without the announcement of the plan.

Thus the universal prevalence of this custom is explained. The Church loves order, and must love it. The thoughtless talk, which almost always keeps to the same thought, as may be heard in many of the sects, especially where the preacher's office is utterly rejected, has something in it distasteful to discriminating people, and distracting to devotion and solemn worship.

(8) *The Thesis—How to find it.*—The thesis which forms the beginning of the sermon outline—*i.e.* the pregnant, rhetorically rounded central thought of the sermon, aiming at the unity of the variety in the text, or at least the standpoint from which the sermon is to open up the text—is not to be invented, but to be found. It must not, as with the rhetoricians, precede the text as a thought previously ready, for which a text is then sought, but must result from it. Moreover, if it is to be of the right kind, it is not produced by abstracting some general edifying thought from the particular contents of the passage and putting shallow commonplaces in place of the concrete fulness of truth and life in the text (*e.g.* preaching on Luke ii. 40–52 on the training of children; or on 1 Pet. v. 6 on humility in general), but it must be found by serious and accurate consideration of the particular elements of the text, by connecting them with one another and summing them up into a unity, and must also be perceived by personal illumination. *The material* which is to be expounded in the sermon must certainly be *ready first*, drawn from the text, before we proceed to the formulating of thesis and divisions!

More particularly, the *genesis of the thesis* is thus:—The

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "pull himself together"—*sich sammeln*. [Trans.]

preacher having first, by repeated reading, allowed the text to work upon himself, and having considered it before God, asks himself, What does this text say to *me*? and then, picturing to himself his hearers and their needs, asks himself, What may they specially require from this text? Then (as he listens also to the voice of the Spirit) certain central ideas become clear to him, gradually forming a mental picture which takes the deeper hold of him and captivates him, the more suitable and serviceable it is, and thus becomes a *germ of testimony*. This will happen either (1) by some element of the text *springing forth* and gripping him as he thinks over it, and accompanying him throughout, until he finally discovers that the whole contents of the text may be placed under this one element as the dominant fundamental thought or principal standpoint, which then only requires to be formulated into the thesis (*e.g.* John xvi. 16 ff., "Yet a little while": Matt. xiv. 22-33, "O thou of little faith!"). Or (2) *several prominent thoughts* strike him *at the same time*, which dominate their immediate context and strive for the mastery in his selection; then he will gradually perceive, from their mutual reference to one another, their true relationship, and, by looking more closely at the idea which lies at the base of them or at the connection which results from their practical application to the present, will find a *unity* for them, under which the whole may be summed up as the dominating standpoint (*e.g.* Col. iii. 1-10, seeking after the things that are above). Or, if no point of the text stands out in special importance above the rest, there appears to him (3), by contemplation of the whole text, a thought, not indeed specifically expressed in it, *but breathing through it all*, there occurs to him, perhaps, a Scripture sentence from some other passage, or a line of a hymn, or a Christian adage, or the like, as a higher, harmonious blending of the different elements of the text, as a *key* which at once opens up the meaning of the whole, as the central thought, externally foreign to the text, and yet to be read everywhere between its lines—which often becomes clear to the preacher by spiritual intuition, by a bold conception, by the gift of *inventio*, to some extent by a kind of inspiration, without any other agency which could actually be stated (*e.g.* for John xx. 11-18, the passage from Ps. cxxxvi. 6, sowing in the tears of bondage and reaping in the joy of liberty: 1 Cor. i. 4-9,

a living Church; Rom. xii. 7-16, true faithfulness in our calling). The possibility of including, without effort, all the more important points of the text in a central thought obtained in any of these three ways, and then subordinating them in detail in any kind of logical sequence, is always *the test* of the correctness and usefulness of the thesis which has been obtained, which is related to the text somewhat as the melody to the song, and which is the more successful in proportion as in arrangement, spirit, and character, it is one with its text, so that anyone who hears them cannot afterwards think of them apart from one another.

*Sic male canitur* was the way in which the famous old music-teacher began his lesson, and played pure discords for his pupil. *Sic male thema invenitur* has first been shown above. Every thesis is bad, or at least illegitimate, which is *invented*, improvised, instead of being sought for and *found* in the Scripture-text. It is often a great temptation, especially for young preachers, to bring with them to their meditation some neat, well-rounded, well-sounding dictum which promises to be effective, as a thesis already prepared. No strange fire must be placed upon God's altar. Apart from our theological knowledge, nothing is to be brought to our meditation but a serious concentrated mind, humbly waiting for the help of the Lord, a holy zeal to serve the Lord among our people, and the effort to let the theme grow out of the text. A sure way to get *bad*, homiletically objectionable thesis, is, further, the *elimination of all the concrete features of the text*, once so much liked, which leads to *commonplaces*. This is the *lazy method* in which so many old and new Rationalists preach; the rich fulness of detail, the features of the text which are really most instructive, just in their concrete and most minute statement, are completely disregarded, and men preach, *e.g.* in the case of Luke ii. 40 ff., not on the very instructive spiritual growth of the boy Jesus, but on the training of children in general, as elsewhere on some Christian virtue, on love, on doing good, etc. In this way one can so easily perorate to his heart's content, and does not need to give himself too much trouble to unite the different points of the text into one complete concrete picture, and to apply it to the particular circumstances. At the same time, this method betrays unfaithfulness and *indifference towards the Scriptures*, over whose

treasures we are placed as stewards, not to set them aside, but to give a portion to each.

Rambach, in his *Præcepta Homiletica*, rightly uttered a warning against theses which are obtained by mere abstraction. "A thesis should not be commonplace." Theses such as, *e.g.* "We shall speak of the centurion at Capernaum," he calls "Calendar theses."

The finding of a good thesis which exhausts the text, and is therefore really profitable, is accomplished generally in three ways. Either *one* prominent feature is manifest, and we perceive that this is the dominant central thought. This is the simplest and easiest way. Or several conspicuous points strike us, so that the question is, Which is the principal one, to which all the rest may be subordinated, or with which at anyrate it may be connected? The preacher then connects these leading points with one another, and discovers their inner relationship or the possibility of uniting them in practical application, and, by deeper study of these connected relationships, he *at last reaches unity*, the fundamental idea which supports all these elements, or even the standpoint under which they may be all grouped: he finds, so to speak, the superscription for all, the common denominator, into which each particular fraction of the text is resolved. Sometimes *no particular point of the text will stand out prominently*, all is co-ordinate, every part equally important, and at the first glance all seems a confused medley of thoughts. Then we must think over it, until, by sudden intuition, by a power of finding which cannot be more particularly analysed, or by inspiration from above, we discover a thought which soars over the text as a higher combination of its varied parts, as a magnet which attracts all parts of the text to itself; then we are filled with an inward joy so that we cry *εὐρησα*, as when the answer is found to a difficult riddle.

If important parts of the text cannot, without unnatural effort, be brought under the principal thought which has been found, the thesis is wrong, and the meditation has to begin over again.

#### EXAMPLES.

*Case 1.*—John xvi. 16 ff., "A little while, and ye behold me no more; and, again, a little while and ye shall see me," etc. Here the phrase, "A little while," sounds in one's ear

of itself over and over again. This phrase must be the thesis, and, as a matter of fact, all may be included under it: for it is (1) a word of *deep affliction* (for the Lord, for the disciples, for us in life); (2) a word of *wholesome warning*, to redeem the time, to be prepared for the future; (3) a word of *blessed comfort*, "and again a little while and ye shall see me": even sorrow and the cross endure but a short time.

Matt. xiv. 22-33: Jesus walking on the sea, and the sinking Peter. Here the phrase in the text, "O thou of little faith," at once strikes us as the dominating central thought, which may be taken as thesis either verbally or in the form of "little faith." Here I see (1) in the *disciples* the easy *beginning* of little faith if wind and waves are contrary; so it is still; (2) in *Peter* its real *cause*; (3) in the *Lord* its *cure*; with strong hand He raises Peter up.

*Case 2.*—Col. iii. 1-10: Here several leading points strike us. "If then ye were raised with Christ, seek the things that are above." . . . "Set your mind on the things that are above." This is the first. Then "Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ . . . shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory,"—another great, important thought. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth,"—again an important inference and warning. In order to group all this together, I connect these points with one another, and find that the exhortation, "Seek those things that are above," is a standpoint under which all may be summed up. *Thesis: Seeking after the things that are above.* (1) Its *fundamental condition*: being dead and risen with Christ ("If then ye were raised with Christ. . . . For ye died"). (2) Its *motive*: in order to be manifested with Him in glory. (3) *The way to it*: the mortifying of the old man.

Luke xviii. 31-43 (*Quinquagesima*, or the Sunday before Lent). The announcement of His sufferings to His disciples, and the healing of the blind man by the wayside near Jericho. "We go up to Jerusalem." "As He drew nigh to Jericho" etc.,—Jesus, therefore, on the way. I also am on the way. What must I take with me on the way? "The Christian's best life-companions": (1) the cross of Christ, to have our part in His atonement; (2) our own cross; it is his cross that drives the blind man to Jesus (thus Ulber).



Luke xix. 41-48 (Tenth Sunday after Trinity). Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, and His cleansing of the temple: two important but heterogeneous elements, in which Burk finds the following common thought:—How the Lord always makes a clear distinction between sinners and sin: (1) towards the former He has always compassion; (2) towards the latter only severity.

*Case 3.*—John xx. 11-18: If I contemplate this text as a whole, I am struck by the contrast of the sorrowful departure and the joyful home-going, and I am reminded of the passage in Ps. cxxxvi. 6, "He that goeth forth and weepeth . . . shall come again with rejoicing," etc. Thesis: "Sowing in the tears of bondage and reaping in the joy of liberty," which carries its division with it. Many other Easter themes may, of course, be constructed from this passage, *e.g.* the Easter question, "Why weepest thou?" etc.

1 Cor. i. 4-9: How can I form into a unity the many separate sections, of which one is as important as the other? They are simply evidences of spiritual life and growth in the Church. So I get the *thesis*: *A living church*. (1) It allows itself to be enriched by Christ in all utterance and all knowledge: (2) it allows the testimony of Christ to be confirmed in it, and becomes rich in all spiritual gifts; (3) it waits for the revelation of Jesus Christ, and allows itself to be kept secure and unreprouvable by Him unto the end.

Rom. xii. 7-16 contains a mass of exhortations very difficult to group together. Here Nietzsche keeps to the last verse: "Set not your mind on high things," and includes under it the whole passage, regarding this warning: (1) in reference to the possession and enjoyment of the good things of life: to seek after high things in this respect is opposed to God and to love: (2) in reference to our daily calling: (3) in reference to our spiritual life, in so far as the simple truth did not satisfy those Christians.

Harless sums up the same passage under the idea of *True faithfulness in our calling*: (1) the conduct of a good Christian is always fidelity in our calling also; (2) that is the true fulfilment of duty where it is done with simplicity, with diligence, and with heartiness; (3) it proceeds only from true love; (4) and true love only from the humility of faith.

Eph. iv. 1-6. Gerok: An olive-leaf for the people of

God, or an exhortation to the unity of the Spirit: (1) the urgent necessity which should drive us to it: (2) the only way which can lead to it: (3) the sure ground on which it must rest. Here something external is added, which, however, correctly brings out the central thought.

Matt. xi. 2-10 (Third Sunday in Advent). John's question from his prison. Burk's thesis on this text runs thus: *O Zion, continue in the light*; (1) even in prison: (2) even amid many trials; (3) even amid the most hostile opinions of men.

The personality of the preacher is, as a rule, to be recognised, in its full distinctiveness, from the very choice of the thesis. How Schleiermacher's spirit is reflected even in the theses of his sermons, and how differently Hofacker's spirit in his—and this, too, not only in the form, but also especially in the matter. Cf. Schuler, *Geschichte der Veränderungen des Geschmacks im Predigen* ["History of the Changes of Taste in Preaching"], 3 Bände, Halle, 1792-1794. In the *early Reformation period* we find in the index of a collection of sermons the series of *doctrinal loci*, and in the Rationalistic period the gamut of *Christian virtues*, and many things of public benefit which have to do neither with doctrine nor ethics. In a collection of sermons by Thomas (Sammlung ii., 1869), we find themes like: The true wisdom; The fear of man; Love for the oppressed people in its relation to Christianity; The place which the King occupies in the nation, and our joy in Him; Christian thankfulness; Christian compassion: Forgiving love in the Christian congregation; Christian peaceableness; Unchristian judgment: Christian freedom, patience, faithfulness, etc.—all very beautiful things, but where are the great facts of redemption, and where is faith in Christ? But if, on the other hand, we have themes like: The approaching last judgment; Behold, the Lamb of God; The indescribable love of God to men as shown in the Incarnation of His Son; Christ, the only source of our happiness: The name of Jesus; The free grace of God in Christ Jesus; The eternal support for our souls; The words from the cross; Satan's kingdom; The Saviour's love for sinners, etc., we recognise at once in these themes of Hofacker, which lay hold of the centre, his whole spirit; here pure kernel-truths, there shells; here nourishing bread of life, there beautiful husks.

*Arrangement and forms of the Thesis.*—If in connection with the *finding* of the thesis, the essential question is its relation to the text in connection with its definite *formulating*, the question is about its relation to the needs of the people and to the sermon, and about its logical and rhetorical expression in language. The following *general rules* are of first importance here:—

1. The thesis must *sum up*, not only the contents of the text, but also *the contents of the whole sermon* in a unity, yet, with a distinct colour indicating the purpose if possible, and at the same time in such a way that each “division” is involved in it, and yet none is separately independent of it.

2. The thesis must only contain *that which relates essentially to the subject*, so that every word of it occupies its definite and *necessary* relation to the whole, and that all secondary matter which is purely ornamental (*epitheta ornantia*) is excluded.

3. It must be as *short and easily remembered* as possible, and hence to some extent rhetorically rounded and well-sounding. But within these limits an abundant variety of forms is possible.

On rule 1.—We demand for the formulating of the thesis a *harmonious* summary of the contents and *colour*. Trite generalities are indeed a summary of the contents, but colourless, indefinite, usually appropriate to several other texts, and therefore defective. The thesis should be so formulated that it *suits this particular text alone*, and hence has a concrete colour, indicating moreover, to some extent, the whole tendency of the text in advance. A thesis such as: “On Faith”: “On Love”; “On the Divinity of Christ,” is no thesis at all, is suitable for a hundred texts, tells the hearer nothing which he did not see for himself, and is therefore aimless. Hence, besides unity, let there be definite colour! So also no individual part of the thesis must be independent: nothing of the subdivisions must be brought into the thesis,—otherwise it becomes distorted and *limping* on one side.

On rule 2.—The comprehensive unity, however, must

itself make a selection from the elements of the text, restricting itself to the essential and necessary, and only introducing the rest in the enlargement of the several divisions. When the rule is laid down that "no *epitheton ornans* is to be introduced into the thesis," an exception is to be made of cases where the *epitheton* gives to the whole its distinct character and *tone*. When, *e.g.*, G. Rieger states as his thesis on the gospel narrative of Simeon, "A noble old man," the word "noble" is indeed an *epitheton ornans*, but a very essential one, expressing the whole contents which follow; for the various features of his nobleness are subsequently considered in succession.

On rule 3.—*Easily remembered brevity and attractiveness of sound* go together. A very long thesis does not sound well and is not easily remembered, which it ought, above all, to be. The hearer should have in the thesis a guide to accompany him throughout the sermon, to make everything more comprehensible to him, and afterwards, again, to remind him of the whole. The thesis must therefore be presented to him in rounded, intelligible form, and this facility for being understood and remembered will be very much strengthened by an *attractive sound*, which, as if of itself, will echo in the ear because it has touched it agreeably. Hence, let there be no protracted parentheses, and generally, *if possible, no parentheses at all* in the thesis, nor even any possessives, adjectives, and principles, except so far as they are absolutely necessary to the definition of the subject,—but precise phrases in brief, but well-rounded form. Formerly many excellent preachers made their theses too long. When, for example, Rieger, on the Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity, states as his thesis: "The necessary quality of those who want to receive and to retain forgiveness of sin, that nothing false be in their mind"—this would certainly be formulated better and more impressively thus: The way to receive and to retain forgiveness of sins, or purity of spirit. Stier's objection to carefulness about attractive sound in constructing the thesis, is somewhat unreasonable, when he says (*Keryktik*, S. 241): "Let all *artificiality* and *calculation* be avoided in the expression of the thesis as well as of the divisions. The rhythm and sound of ideas is of no consequence, but always and entirely popular Scriptural simplicity and fulness." We do not want artificiality, but real Spirit-filled art, which is natural to a skilled

homilist, is not to be excluded. But when Stier wants even to avoid all calculation in expression, this is quite wrong; for the words of the thesis, on which so much depends, should be most seriously weighed and often measured most exactly, in regard to their correctness, clearness, and effective force. An unskillful, angular expression is much more objectionable in the thesis than in the course of the sermon. And even if it is not the rhythm and sound that are of importance, yet a biblical and popular statement agrees very well with a nicely arranged, pleasantly-sounding form. Apples of gold are to be set in baskets of silver.

Theses may be classified partly according to their different *statement of contents*, and partly according to their different grammatical form.

1. In reference to the different kinds and methods of statement of the contents, we may distinguish—

(*aa*). Theses which express the contents of the text purely in their *historical and didactic objective form*, and theses which state the contents of the text as already *applied* to the circumstances of to-day, or even as thought of in the process of application.

*Examples of the first kind.*—Nitzsch on Gal. iii. 1-5, "The folly of the Galatians." Krummacher on Isa. xlix. 14-16 ("Can a woman forget her sucking child?" etc.) "Zion's building, Zion's complaint, God's encouragement"; Luke vi. 47-49, "The wise and the foolish builder." *On the border* between the first and the second kind, lies, for example, the above-mentioned thesis on 1 Cor. i. 4-9, "A living Church"; there one perceives at once that this is held up as a model for the present. Or Matt. xv. 1-14 ("This people draweth nigh me with their mouth; . . . in vain do they worship me," etc.), "In vain do they worship me: a warning call for the blind and leaders of the blind."

*The second kind* is the more frequent. Examples: Gal. ii. 20 ("Christ liveth in me"), "Christ in us." Ps. xciv. 18, 19 ("When I said, my foot slippeth, Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul"), "The rapid changes in the spiritual life of God's children." Here the text is at once

applied to the present. Matt. xix. 27 ("What shall we have therefore?"), "Our claims on the riches of divine grace."

(*bb*). Theses, which only indicate the *way* and the direction, and such as in themselves express the *aim* toward which the sermon moves; or theses which only outline a frame for the contents of the sermon which are only given in its several parts,—and therefore *formal*, *periphrastic*; and such as express the actual contents in compact form, and are therefore *material*, *central* (in some cases to be distinguished also as causal and final).

*Examples of the first kind.*—Matt. viii. 5-13 (the centurion of Capernaum), "Three strong supports of our faith: (1) the love of Christ; (2) His faithfulness: (3) His power." Matt. xx. 1-16 (The labourers in the vineyard), "Some questions from this passage: (1) What shall we have therefore? (cf. xix. 27): (2) Why stand ye here all the day idle? (3) Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" Matt. vii. 7 ff. ("Ask, and it shall be given unto you"), "A threefold warning and a sixfold promise."

*Material or central theses* are, for example, Theremin on John xvii. 2 ("As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh"), "We are Christ's property." Gilbert (*Polem. Predigten*, Leipzig, 1846) on Deut. vi. 5-7 ("Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart: . . . and these words shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children"), "The soul of all education is love." The same preacher on Matt. iv. 1-12, "The most dangerous temptations are overcome by a heart which rests in God alone." Gal. v. 14 ("The whole law is fulfilled in one word," etc.), "The love of our neighbour, which is the fulfilling of the law."

2. According to their *different grammatical form*, theses can never be quite exhaustively classified—at least the material ones.

(*aa*). The *formal* theses are formed partly by the simple mention of an *idea* with some definition qualifying it (e.g. Luke ix. 28-36, "The King in His beauty": John viii. 46 ff., "The glory of a true Christian"; Hagenbach on 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, "The comfort of Chris-

tendom amid the sorrows of this world"), partly by the juxtaposition of *two* different or contrasted ideas by means of a conjunction merely (*e.g.* Nitzsch on Matt. xxiii. 37-39, "Christ and Jerusalem"; on John xii. 35, "Brotherly love and discipleship"), partly by the *interrogative form*, either *direct* (*e.g.* "How should we pray?" "Who is a child of God?" "What does the Risen One bring to us?"), or *indirect*, which is still more frequent (*e.g.* "How God leads us through sorrow to joy": Heb. iv. 6, 7, "What the word '*To-day*' means in the call to repentance").

(*bb*). Still more varied are the forms of language for the *material* or complete thesis, which is formulated partly as a *categorical, independent sentence* (*e.g.* Luke xiv. 16-24, "Yet there is room"), partly without a sentence, by a subject *qualified by an attribute* (J. Müller on Luke xii. 49, "The disturbing activity of Christianity"), partly in the form of an exclamation, an imperative, or a wish (*e.g.* "Awake, thou that sleepest!" "Through night to light!" "Let us be faithful unto death!" "Peace be upon Israel!").

*The metrical arrangement* of the thesis in verse, with the object of making it more easily remembered (cf. Ahlfeld, Gerok, and occasionally also Tholuck and Cl. Harms), is admissible rather as an exception and a personal licence for poetic talents than as a rule. At anyrate, it should not become a stereotyped fashion; nor should it be mere rhyming, but must be true poetry, which is naturally and without effort suggested. The use of a line from a well-known hymn is often to be preferred, since this is even more easily remembered, and has the further advantage of a certain authoritative value.

Here we must not be actuated by the desire to please, and must avoid all mannerism. Many who, in their earlier years, often used rhyme (*e.g.* Ahlfeld and Gerok), afterwards abandoned it more and more. When Gerok, for example, on Jas. iii. 1-16, states as his thesis: "Set a watch upon thy tongue," and divides it thus—

1. Sie ist nur klein und scheint gering,
2. Und richtet an so grosse Ding' ;
3. Sie hat manch' Höllenfeu'r entflammt,
4. Und führt doch so ein köstlich Amt

[It is but small, and trifling seems,  
Yet of what mighty things it dreams ;  
Enkindling sometimes fires of hell,  
Yet speaking precious words as well]

this is perhaps more easily remembered than many another division, and follows the text with considerable naturalness : but its practical value is not great. Rieger once preached skilfully, on Matt. xx. 1-16 (the labourers in the vineyard), about the connection between sanctification and justification, taking the verse of a hymn—

1. Hilf, dass ich wandeln mag, als wenn durch frommes Leben,  
Ich könnt' erwerben hier die Schätze jener Welt ;
2. Doch wollest du dabei mir solchen Glauben geben,  
Der mein Verdienst für nichts und dich für alles hält.

[Help me that I may walk as if by pious living  
I might even here obtain the joys that are above ;  
Yet of Thy mercy such faith to me giving  
As counts my merit naught, and all in all Thy love.]

This subject is, on the whole, of such secondary importance that it is not worth while spending much trouble on it.

We may put on the same platform with rhymes that are devoid of taste, theses, the modern or trivial statement of which is an offence against Church decency, *e.g.* "Christ, the General Superintendent (instead of the Chief Shepherd or Chief Pastor) of all Christendom" ; or "Christ under the symbol of a brooding hen." This is in as bad taste as that old thesis : Zacchæus under the figure of a climbing toad— (1) going up like the wind ; (2) coming down like the lightning (see Schaf, *Der Landprediger*, S. 362).

If the question is asked whether the thesis may be poetical in the expression of its thought, if not in form,— *i.e.* a *metaphor* which the old preachers, especially Heinrich Müller, were so fond of using (*e.g.* "the golden acre of the heart," "the armour of the spiritual knight"), as a rule it will hold good that the metaphor to be chosen should be *taken from the biblical series of figures*, or should be connected with it, and must not be so forced and



artificial that the simplicity, clearness, and force of the text are thereby injured.

Even Harms gave to his *Passion Sermons*, throughout, metaphorical theses, *e.g.* "The Passion a pillar on which the Church rests"; "A pillow for the head in a dying hour." Cf. W. Hofacker, "Prayer the pulse of the spiritual life."

Let us only beware of plays upon words, by which the real substance is often the loser.

(2) *Division—Logical rules.*—With the discovery of the unity, that of the division is closely related. Its supreme law is that it must neither suppress any natural division nor attach to the whole any division which does not grow out of it. But the *logical correctness* of division in relation to the thesis requires (1) that none of the divisions is identical with the thesis (which would, of course, be a violation of the supreme law just stated); (2) that the several divisions logically exclude each other; (3) that they assume each other and are logically connected, in order harmoniously to express the whole, in relation to which they must be always of equal value (co-ordinate); (4) that in the number of divisions none is wanting which is contained in the idea of the thesis—that, therefore, the thesis covers the same extent of thought as the several divisions together. The whole is equal to the sum of its parts.

*Origin.*—That division is above all to be sought which is contained in the text itself; for the *principal thoughts of the text must be the principal divisions of the sermon*; each of the latter must rest on a definitely expressed point of the text, or at least on one clearly suggested in the context. The *order of the text*, when rightly discovered, is therefore also, as a rule, the best *fundamental arrangement of the sermon*. Since the thesis is often deduced only from the former, the majority of the divisions are frequently ready *before* the thesis, but they originate from the same source. The divisions may arise so directly from the text, that the sections of the text may recur as divisions of the sermon, whether the division states them

verbatim, or sums up a portion of the text in a brief clause. Only division must not be a *breaking in pieces*, but a *construction* of the text.

*Example.*—Exodus xv. 22–26. The Gospel of Marah, “I am the Lord thy Healer” [Luther’s version]. (1) The exclusiveness of the word “*I*”; (2) the eternal permanence of the word “*am*”; (3) the comforting universality and particularity of the word “*thy*”; (4) the firmly assured truth of the word “*Healer*,” which calls for our confidence. Sometimes, also, thesis and division may coincide, when there is only a twofold division, which is given directly with the thesis, *e.g.* in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. xviii. 23–35): “What a great free gift, and at the same time sacred test, is the forgiveness of sins.”

Frequently, however, the division does not arise directly from the text alone and in itself, or through recapitulation of the parts of the text, but only by transferring the text into the present, therefore *by its application*. While I am allowing the contents of the text to throw light on various aspects of the Christian life, various arrangements suggest themselves for the division; the focus of light in the thesis divides itself into various rays. Here also there is this difference, that, whereas in the first case mentioned above the text is divided into its parts or sections, in this case the *undivided, complete* thought of the text is considered from different aspects. The former is *division of the passage* itself, the latter is *division of the discourse* upon the passage (Nitzsch, S. 112), or of the practical thought on which it is based.

*Example.*—Phil. iv. 5, “The Lord is at hand.” This is (1) a joyous call for all believers, (2) a word of comfort for all troubled ones, (3) a word of warning for all confident ones, (4) a word of alarm for all Christ’s enemies (Florey).

*Categories of division.*—In order to obtain suitable

standpoints for the contents of the text, or for their exposition and application, there are certain general categories which do not result merely from the particular text, but are partly adapted from dialectics and rhetoric, and the particular *schemata* of which is called the *topic*. But these general fundamental divisions are only to be applied when *the textual division of itself coincides with them*, and they only serve to help the preacher to perceive more quickly and more clearly the connection of ideas in the text: whilst their use is out of place when they interfere with an organic growth of the division out of the text, and when the latter could only by an effort be forced into one of the *schemata* of these *τόποι*.

The *most important* of these categories are:—

1. *Exposition and application*, or more exactly, explanation, confirmation (proof and defence), and application of the idea (cf. above, chap. iii. 1 (b)). Yet these two should not be so mechanically and pedantically kept apart that only the last part should always contain an application of the truths of the text to the circumstances of to-day, as was the case before and at the time of Spener.

Thus, for example, L. Hofacker, on Luke xiii. 1-9 ("Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"—the Parable of the Fig-Tree), treats of conversion: (1) what it is to be converted; (2) how necessary it is for everyone to be converted. Moreover, even Schleiermacher thus divides his sermon on the value of obedience: (1) the obedience of the Redeemer; (2) application to ourselves. If I want, for example, to expound homiletically the sacredness of the oath, the subject is: (1) explanation of its nature; (2) proof and defence of its lawfulness in certain cases; (3) practical application, *i.e.* indication of the important bearing which the honouring or violation of the oath has upon the whole life.

2. *Negation and affirmation*.—Here the false view of the truth contained in a text is first refuted, and then its true sense is unfolded; or it is shown how the world often

denies a divine truth, and then how the latter justifies itself in opposition to the world and condemns it.

Matt. v. 39-45 ("Resist not evil; . . . love your enemies"). Thesis: Christian love, which repays evil with good. (1) What a different view of love and justice the world has, and hence it regards Christian love as folly; (2) how, on the contrary, this is the true wisdom which leads to life. 1 Pet. iv. 8 ("Love covereth a multitude of sins"); here the obvious false view is first to be shown, and then the true meaning of the phrase.

3. *Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis*, the latter of which is often reserved for the amplification or the conclusion.

W. Hofacker on St. Stephen's Day: "The appearance of Christ, how it brings life and death; it brings (1) Life; (2) Death; (3) Life in Death." Matt. x. 16-20, "(1) Be afraid of the world; (2) be not afraid of the world." (Thesis and Antithesis).

4. *Origin, Progress, and Aim* is a division which is very often applicable, e.g. in descriptions of the Christian life, in showing the development of faith, the kingdom of God, the Church, etc. Related to this is the schema: *Past, Present, Future*, or even two of these categories only.

1 John iii. 2 ("Now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be"): (1) what we now are; (2) what we shall be. Similar is the schema: *Retro-spective, Introspective, Prospective*.

5. On a particular subject we may distinguish: *Its Conditions, its Nature, its Consequences*; or *Meaning, Origin, and Aim*.

Nitzsch on Prov. xxiii. 26 ("My son, give me thine heart"): "(1) Whose request this is. (2) What is the meaning of this request? (3) What are the tacit conditions and motives under which it will gain attention?" Eph. i. 3-8, The rich spiritual blessing with which God has blessed us through Christ: (1) in its origin (the eternal purpose of God); (2) in its nature and value (redemption through His blood, forgive-

ness of sins); (3) in its final aim (that we should be holy . . . to the praise of His glorious grace). Matt. vii. 16-20, "By their fruits ye shall know them." A sure standard for the right judgment of ourselves and others. (1) The *Meaning* of the rule for our judgment: look at the fruit; (2) its *Reason*: the outer fruit corresponds to the inner state of the tree; (3) the added *Warning*: the fruitless tree is ripening for the fire.

To this class belongs also the division: *Meaning, Truth, Necessity*. *E.g.* 1 John v. 12, an apostolic warning for Christless Christians: "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1) Its sense and meaning; (2) its truth; (3) its necessity, especially for modern times.

6. Similarly in the case of subjects of an *ethical character* (*e.g. a duty*), we may often divide: (1) by their *nature and meaning*; (2) by their *motives*; (3) by the *blessing* which results from their fulfilment. Or (1) what this duty requires of us; (2) how we are to fulfil it.

7. More distinctively on Christian lines are the divisions: *exhortation and comfort*; *warning* (or threatening) and *promise*; *divine gifts* and *human duty*; *truth humbling* and *exalting*; *Christian doing* and *Christian suffering*; *living and dying*; references to the *world* and to the *kingdom of God*, or to *ourselves*, our *neighbour*, and to *God*, etc.

When Theremin seeks chiefly to lay down two kinds of categories as the *fundamentum divisionis*: (1) possibility, necessity, actuality; (2) the fundamental ethical ideas: duty, virtue, blessedness—the first reminds us too much of the abstractions of metaphysics, the second of the catch-words and battle-cries of Rationalism. Besides, the list of categories is not so poor that we should content ourselves only with a twofold fundamental division. If we can keep to *biblical categories*, this will always be the most edifying. If the text indicates any particular arrangement or division, let us adhere to it without too much artificial formulating, and let us not be too anxious about what rhetoricians and philosophers may say about it, if only clearness, order, and completeness are secured. Here also let us consider *retentibility* and *naturalness*.

F. E. Ziegler (*The fundamentum dividendi*, or the logical connection between the principal proposition and the divisions of the sermon, Dresden, 1851) discusses this subject in five hundred pages, which cost him twenty years, so that the whole of homiletics is for him little else than instruction in division. He thinks that the subject really belongs still to the unsolved problems. But it is not so bad as this. It is only when we undertake to analyse minutely the whole art of logic with all the requisite apparatus,—which Homiletics does not need to give, but only to assume,—and to draw up a *complete* list of *fundamenta dividendi*, though the variety of texts and the freedom of their ideas is infinite, that we work for decades in this laboratory. We Germans have a real mania for wishing to put everything into the compartments of our own ideas.

With regard to *the number of divisions*,—they should always, for the sake of being comprehensively remembered, be *few*, two or three, four at most, and only in very urgent cases, or where the sermon approaches the homily, more than this. Dichotomy or trichotomy should be the usual plan. Polytomies are burdensome to the memory, and easily weaken gradually the effect of the thesis. Instead of too many, rather let too few divisions be announced. On the other hand, it is wrong to lay down the twofold division as an absolute law for all sermons (as formerly: exposition and application). This would not only result in a considerable monotony of structure, but unnatural violence would also be done to a large number of texts.

Formerly theses were often announced with six and ten and even twelve divisions. C. L. Harms has frequently six to eight, many of which, however, might easily be reduced to a trichotomy. G. Rieger preached on New Year's Day from Luke ii. 21 on the theme, "Let us be satisfied with what is here," in as many as twelve divisions. "We find here: (1) the acceptable time of grace; (2) a Jesus and Saviour; (3) the true Church; (4) the precious Word of God; (5) the sacraments; (6) an easy and acceptable worship resulting therefrom; (7) little children; (8) the ministry of angels; (9) the divine Providence and Government; (10)

respite in trials for our strengthening; (11) abundant comfort in real sufferings, even in the most painful (circumcision); (12) a joyous hope of everlasting life.

In reference to the laws of *brevity, completeness, rhythm,* and *attractive sound*, which are applicable to the construction of the divisions as well as of the thesis, *three principal modes of arrangement* may be distinguished: I. The several divisions enter into an outward *symmetrical relationship* to one another and form a *parallelismus membrorum*, *e.g.*: appealing love and constant unbelief; deadly hate and self-sacrificing faithfulness. (Albertini on 2 Cor. xii. 1-9: A chapter from the heart-history of all pardoned sinners. 1. Everywhere glorious revelations and bitter, humiliating suffering. 2. Everywhere the all-sufficiency of divine grace and the unsatisfied spirit of man. 3. Everywhere painful remedies and blessed result from their faithful use.) II. The several divisions represent not so much a symmetrical co-ordination as an ascending or descending *chain*, since the first clause of one division always becomes the second of the following one; *e.g.* Acts viii. 26 ff., the Ethiopian treasurer. 1. Readest thou what is written? 2. Believest thou what thou readest? 3. Confessest thou what thou believest? 4. Livest thou what thou confessest? Matt. xx. 1-16, The labourers in the vineyard. Burk: The Call of God to Men. (1) To the idlers: they shall be called; (2) to the called: they shall be chosen; (3) to the chosen: they shall see the salvation of God. III. Instead of a progress, a kind of *circular movement* takes place between the divisions, so that the conclusion returns to the beginning; *e.g.* Luke vi. 31, 32, "They that are whole need not a physician." Jesus wants—(1) to make the righteous sinners: (2) to make the sinners righteous. Matt. v. 4, That light hearts must become heavy, and heavy hearts light.

Let us at the same time avoid tricks of speech and only use a rhythm which is pleasant and helpful for remembering the whole, when it arises unsought and without effect.

Finally, the *announcement of the division* is not to be insisted on so strictly as that of the thesis, since it is often sufficient to state in the thesis the principal common standpoint, and under some circumstances it may be more suitable to state the leading thought of the particular division only at the beginning of the latter (so, for example, often Spurgeon); at the same time, the statement of the divisions is in most cases to be recommended for the easier understanding and general view of the whole, as well as for the more accurate impression of the leading points.

(β) THE AMPLIFICATION.

(s) *The Introduction or exordium* has partly the *general* function of stating for the hearers the motive for the special treatment of this particular text, and of awakening their attention and interest for the subject chosen by the preacher, and especially the *particular* function of connecting text and thesis with one another for the hearer, so that he may recognise the latter as resulting really from the text; in this way the introduction becomes the transition. As a preparation for what follows the exordium, (1) must *not be too protracted*, must not on any account be as long as one of the divisions; (2) must *not contain anything unnecessary*, but only such matter as somehow prepares the way for understanding of the thesis and also its separation into the particular divisions, so that thoughtful hearers can gradually anticipate the thesis and, in general outline, even the leading divisions; (3) it must *not weaken* or even disturb the *keynote* which the reading of the text has struck, since it is the work of the sermon in all its parts to continue and increase this; (4) hence the custom which still prevails here and there of *preceding the text with a preliminary introduction*, and then of sometimes following it with a second special introduction, is not to be justified either homiletically or liturgically, except perhaps on high feast-days, since the whole sermon has to be



constructed on the basis of the Word of God which has been read, and not—as it would otherwise appear, especially in freely-chosen texts—to make a passage of Scripture subordinate to a human train of thought already begun; and since, besides, the above-mentioned object of the introduction assumes that the text has been read, while a twofold introduction, as the history of preaching shows, easily leads to a disproportionate length, and injures the proper amplification.

That the introduction should exclusively serve the purpose of connecting text and thesis, and not, at the same time, of awakening attention and interest for the subject, is a view which, in the case of Palmer, is explained by the praiseworthy effort of separating homiletics and rhetoric by as wide a gulf as possible; but this is going too far. The one does not exclude the other. In practice the element of arousing interest is always involuntarily connected with the other. Or should it not be regarded as Christian *attentum reddere auditorem*? Luther was not fond of the old rhetoricians, but he could say, after an introduction, “This is only said by way of preface to the sermon of St. Paul,” to arouse us to study more diligently God’s Word, as indeed it would be very necessary to remember every day and in every sermon.

Let us never make an introduction merely for the purpose of making one, as Cicero, when he did not know what else to do, used to write prefaces for future books. Let us also avoid reducing by mere abstractions the *specialia* of the text to something general, in order to proceed from this again to the particular; let us rather keep thesis and text in our view together, and say everything *with reference to the thesis*, and, if it is possible in brief space, also with reference to the divisions, so that the announcement of these will result quite naturally. Cicero (*Ad Her.* i. 5) says: “Vitiosum exordium est, quod in plures causas potest accommodari, quod vulgare dicitur: idem, quod non ea ipsa causa natum videatur.” To utter commonplaces in the introduction, which are obvious to every hearer, *e.g.* that there are many troubles and adversities, or the like, produces exactly the opposite effect to that which is intended, namely, instead of sympathy and interest, inattention and

weariness. If we do not find any appropriate thought, let us rather proceed at once to our subject; for *an introduction is not absolutely necessary*. L. Hofacker occasionally plunges at once into his text and his thesis with an introduction of three or four lines; no one will wish to blame him on that account.

Special rules for preparing good exordia, including the *transitus*, are impossible, when we consider the infinite variety of texts and of their homiletic treatment. Only this rule generally holds good, that even in the exordium *the text should be adhered to as closely as possible*. This is especially important for sermons in which *exposition of the text* is to predominate. In such cases we should connect the introduction directly with the text, seek to maintain the impression produced by the reading of it, let the note which it strikes find expression in words, and fix the leading thought, in order finally to concentrate this in the thesis. Or let us go back over the text and explain briefly its *connection* with what precedes it, its historical, exegetical, or doctrinal assumptions, in order thus to prepare the way for a thorough understanding of the text itself. Or—as was formerly frequently the custom—let us put at the beginning a biblical story or *another biblical statement*, which serves to prepare the way for the special point of view from which the import of the text is afterwards looked at in thesis and division, and to show its genuinely biblical character. Or let us compare the leading thought of the text with other passages of Scripture, which perhaps emphasise a different side of the same truth, or perhaps apparently contradict it, and then seek to harmonise them.

If, on the other hand, the chief weight of the sermon falls on the *applicatio*, the introduction may indicate the necessity of an ever fresh emphasising, for the present generation, of this or that truth in the text, or the offence which it gives to the natural man in general and to the modern spirit in particular, or at the time of a Church

festival may show its connection with this or even with the season of the year or the period of the world's history generally, in order to illustrate these from the text; or, under certain circumstances, may even take for its starting-point occurrences in the congregation, experiences and observations in pastoral work, incidents in spiritual life generally, or may refer to the previous Sunday, or, finally, may connect itself with the hymn before sermon.

To introduce our hearers at once into the very centre of the text is, in general, more suited for advanced congregations, whereas those which are less advanced in biblical knowledge often make it necessary to descend, even in the introduction, to their needs and attainments.

*Examples.*—On Good Friday, or at other times in the Passion season, Heb. xii. 2 (“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith—who endured the cross”) may be taken as a starting-point, and from it we may draw as our thesis, “Looking in faith unto Jesus.” Or the solemn journey of Abraham with his son Isaac into the land of Moriah for the sacrifice may be used as an historical parallel to Christ's journey to the cross, where, too, a Father gives for an offering His beloved, only Son. With the thesis, “Be not ye the servants of men” (1 Cor. vii. 23), we may start from the observation that even after the abrogation of external slavery there is a disposition which prefers slavery to freedom, which can then be shown by incidents in the region of spiritual life. On 1 John ii. 23 (“Whosoever denieth the Son,” etc.) we may commence with the fact that nowadays many think they can believe on God without believing on the Son, and then we may show that the denial of the Son is a giving up of the Father also. Psalm xviii. 28 (“For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness”) requires first a brief sketch of life, how it is full of mysteries: then we are to show how necessary are the ways of divine light in this darkness.

*Historically.*—Luther, as a rule, starts with the thought of the Church season, and with a comprehensive summary of the contents of the Perikope [“gospel” or “epistle”], at the same time often combining other elements—the importance or the difficulty of the text, etc. Spener's

introductions are contrasts, short forecasts of the sermon which follows, and in a certain sense anticipations. The monstrous phenomena of that time—when they distinguished an *exordium generale, speciale*, and often also *specialissimum*, and divided the first again into distinct parts, thus making a small sermon in itself, and then only in the “special exordium” proceeding to the actual theme—are partly connected with the tendency to break away from the compulsory use of the *pericopae*, since, in the *exordium generale*, they treated some passage having often a very loose connection with the text, and were thus able to introduce their hearers to a larger wealth of Scripture. Cl. Harms and Dräseke distinguished themselves by practical, rousing introductions, Schleiermacher by dialectic introductions. Both kinds are sometimes found united in Theremin. Stier (*Keryktik*, S. 233 ff.) says with perfect truth that the most suitable form of introduction for a living congregation, but at the same time one that is only appropriate for such, is that in which a preacher, penetrated by the spirit of the text, leads his hearers by a vigorous and comprehensive statement right into the heart of the passage—the *vapere in medium textum*, which is the most striking preparation for the calm exposition of that which has been so forcibly announced, and at the same time the most immediate justification of the choice of the text, whereas for a congregation which is not very advanced in biblical knowledge the most suitable exordium is that which starts on a level with the hearers, their ideas, their needs, and their attainments.

A master in clever, terrible, and often very coarse and ludicrous introductions, was *Abraham a Santa Clara* (Ulrich Megerle), the celebrated barefooted Augustinian and imperial court preacher in Vienna, (*d.* 1709).

The custom, originating in the Middle Ages, of the so-called *susprium*, *i.e.* a short prayer inserted between the announcement of the divisions and their amplification,—which at first consisted merely of an Ave Maria,—has as its object, as distinguished from the ordinary liturgical prayers, to seek the blessing of God for preacher and hearers specially for the meditation which is then to follow. The more the preacher feels the need of

repeatedly collecting his thoughts before God, of being strengthened for the testimony he has now to bear, and the more the hearers can at the same time learn therefrom to apply the contents of the sermon to themselves and to carry it into their own private prayer, the less will this venerable and edifying tradition be allowed to fall into disuse. A too protracted prayer is, however, just as unsuitable here as a liturgical formula, always the same. It should rather be a short, extemporaneous prayer referring to the principal subject of the sermon, or a verse of a hymn which gives approximate expression to it.

Too long prayers are found, *e.g.*, in Rieger, and also in Ahlfeld and L. Harms. The interruption then is too violent, so that after the prayer is ended one has trouble in recalling the divisions and the thesis. Let us rather have a longer prayer at the close. But it is just as out of place for Erdmann and others to try to make a *liturgical portion* of it, by always inserting here similar verses and prayers. For this prayer should be a counterbalance to the liturgically prescribed prayers, in which the particular subject of the sermon is not specified, whilst an inward need is surely felt to pray about the subject which specially presents itself in the text. *The suspirium must have the contents of the sermon in particular as its subject*; then only is it for speaker and hearers a help to collect the thoughts and a preparation for what follows. It is also well when the congregation sees from the *suspirium* flowing freely from the heart that the preacher can indeed pray with power from the heart also, and not merely read printed prayers; for the same reason also, the stereotyped use of certain passages, such as "Sanctify us through Thy truth," etc., is not to be recommended. A beautiful *suspirium* is to be found in Cl. Harms (*Offenb.* S. 167): "Lord, I take the Word; take Thou the souls who hear it, and incline them to what they hear in this hour."

(2) *The actual amplification* is related to the plan as the realisation to the idea, as the expression and representation to the thought. Since the subject which is to be enlarged upon is not directly the text, but the *thesis*,—although in

reality they both coincide more fully in proportion as the thesis is faithful to the text,—throughout the whole amplification *the thesis* must above all be kept constantly in view, so that we may not deviate from it too widely. Let us also be careful in regard to the particular parts that, as far as possible, *they do not become too disproportionate* in extent, but especially that through the *donum perseverantiae* we continue with *equal freshness* to the end, so that the impression may not be weakened by relaxing the force; and finally, that each individual division be to some extent complete in itself, so that the transition from one division to the other may appear with some definiteness, though not too abruptly. Hence it is clear that the powers of discovery and arrangement must continue in activity during the amplification also.

Even the best outline makes little impression if the amplification is not fresh and clear, serious and forceful, arousing and arresting, but tedious. On the other hand, a good, lively amplification may cause a defective arrangement to be gladly overlooked: it may even then be productive of much good. *Most depends upon the amplification.* Then the first general rule is, *to keep the thesis in view.* We must not spin out one thought to such length that at last we have to build quite a number of bridges to get back again to the thesis and to get hold of the division again. Otherwise the second rule is also violated: The divisions *as proportionate as possible.* This is of course not to be understood pedantically. If the first division embraces two-thirds of the text, it is quite justifiable for it to take up the same space in the amplification. But to shoot away one's powder almost entirely in the first part, and then to finish off the rest with a few sentences is a mistake, because the harmony and symmetry of the whole are thus spoiled. Still more important in the expansion of the several parts is the requirement that we do not "*fall off*;" that we do not relax our efforts. There should be no disproportion, not merely in the extent, but also in the matter of the several parts. A beginning ever so good, if it is followed by a slight amplification, and finally by a feeble conclusion, will produce no effect. The converse way would be better—to rise

gradually from the weaker to the better, for men in their judgments usually remember what is last.

If in our mental preparation we find a falling-off after a special effort, an ebb after a flow, let us then betake ourselves again to prayer, and obtain fresh vigorous strength from above. One luminous thought must follow another, and in the application one sword-thrust after another must reach men's hearts, and particularly towards the end of a section it is necessary to concentrate the substance of it for *an impressive stroke*, and in the following division to lead gradually up to a fresh one; then the hearers do not give up and grow weary in their attentiveness and devoutness.

To go into fuller detail—the amplification has, in connection with the text, to seek the solution of the problem suggested in the thesis and the division by the following *threefold method* (cf. above, chap. iii. 1 (b):—homiletic text-exposition, explanation of the Christian ideas, proof and application).

1. By *Explanation*.—The meaning and import of the thesis must be set forth *in extenso*. This is done partly by *explanation of the thought* (e.g. what it means: to be spiritually poor, to love not the world, to accept Christ, to be justified, etc.), and this again by separating it into its various elements, by adducing cognate ideas; or by simple or varied contrast, negation, limitation, and especially by supplying what the text leaves the reader to find out for himself, and only indicates between the lines; partly by *going back to the assumptions* on which the thesis is based, or even by following up its meaning to its *consequences*; partly also by *showing the importance and value* of admitting it, accepting it, and practising it, the full and thorough understanding of the subject being impossible without this last.

2. By *Proof*.—*The truth* of what is stated in the thesis or in the several divisions must be proved. This is principally effected by *Scripture proof*, but this is to be presented in its harmony with the testimony of the moral consciousness, of the Christian conscience, of experience,

and of history. Here the preacher, in order to remove possible doubts and objections, may examine all kinds of instances, even contradictory ones, and then set the Scriptures as judge between them, and may even use occasionally experiences from his own life or that of others, yet without making such anecdotes a fixed fashion.

3. By *illustration and individualising*, and by *touching and moving the hearers with an ethical and religious influence*.—Explanation and proof must be stated in such a way that the hearer not merely appropriates the words mechanically, but grasps the meaning of them independently and vividly, and learns to apply it practically, and that it therefore becomes to him a clear picture and an inwardly moving force. The abstract thought must receive a living form before the eyes of the hearer, and thus claim from him, personally and directly, obedience to the truth. This is attained partly by description, especially by historical explanation, through which the elements of the thought, or even the brief suggestions of the text, present themselves to the vivid view of the hearer, partly by *example* taken from the sacred narrative or from history generally, or from daily life; partly by similes formed after the model of Scripture, the right choice of which and the sure, not halting, arrangement of them always requires a certain practical talent and observation of life, an insight into the higher unity of the laws of the natural and the spiritual life, and in regard to which we have to beware, not only of too frequent use, but also especially of mixing our metaphors, so that the clearness of the *tertium comparationis* may not be obscured. There must also, especially, be *individualising*, which shows the general in its personal embodiment, lends flesh and blood to the truths of the text by applying them to particular human conditions, to various classes of men; description of the natural heart and of men generally as they live and move, so that in these concrete features the hearers may recognise themselves as “taken



in the net of divine truth" (Palmer), and that no escape may be possible from the eye of the divine word, which accurately observes all unitedly, and sees thoroughly each one in particular. And finally, the purpose is to be attained by *apostrophising the hearers*, by addressing them directly with the words "thou" or "you" ["ye"], by which on the moral side the *exposition* becomes an *imposition* [in the Latin sense] on their hearts and consciences, the word of truth becomes the judge of secret thoughts, and thus their own possession in a special degree.

The last-named—the *individualising* and, what is closely connected with it, the thorough spiritual arousing of the hearer, which depends essentially on the *elucidation* of the whole text and its several truths—is very specially necessary for the living appropriation of a sermon. Without this excellence a sermon will never be a penetrating one. It is so great and important that where it appears in a luminous and striking way, many defects in a sermon otherwise, even defects and gaps in the division, are readily forgotten or overlooked. On the other hand, the want of this element easily makes a sermon tedious and ineffective, for general explanations and demonstrations, without individualising and particular illustration, leave people cold and indifferent. Ryle (*The Christian Leaders*, p. 197) says: "The majority of hearers do not want fine words, very exact proof, deep metaphysical abstractions, nice distinctions, profound scholarship, etc., but they delight in simple language, homely ideas, effective illustrations, direct appeal to the conscience, short sentences, a glowing and affectionate seriousness in the whole exposition. He who possesses these latter qualities will seldom preach to empty benches."

Most of the *homiletic great ones* of ancient and modern, and especially of more recent times, owe their great success particularly to the gift of *illustration* by which everything which they want to lay upon the heart of the hearer gets hands and feet, flesh and blood, so that it impresses itself much more deeply and clearly, and the hearer is involuntarily led to perceive, in what has been so concretely described, his own counterfeit presentment, and hence to apply it to his own heart and life, upon which ultimately the whole fruit of the sermon depends.

Special masters in this, in addition to the ancients—Basil, Chrysostom, the two Gregories—are Whitefield (cf. Ryle, *Christian Leaders*, p. 53, on a scene in a sermon of Whitefield's. The sinner is depicted as a blind beggar, who is groping his way forward with his staff on a dangerous path in a dark night. He approaches nearer and nearer to the precipice; one step more, and he is lost. The congregation listens breathlessly. Then, as the beggar is just about to take the fatal step forward, one of the congregation, Lord Chesterfield, springs from his seat, exclaiming, "He is lost! he is lost!"—quite forgetting that it was all only a picture), Krummacher, and several English and Scottish preachers, such as Spurgeon, Punshon, Guthrie, McLeod, etc. If the truth appears to the mind of the hearer, not merely in general strokes and lines, but as a complete picture set in a distinct frame with living figures and fresh colours as a tableau, it operates incomparably more deeply, more effectively, more permanently, than if only general outlines indicate the direction, as it were the neighbourhood of heaven, from whence this or that truth springs, from whence this or that blessing is to be obtained (cf. the Arabic proverb: "He is the best orator who can change the ears of the people into eyes," so that the subject or the person lives and moves before them).

Of course the element of illustration is not to appear in the amplification merely *after* the explanation and proof, but very often *along with* these and *in* them. Nay, it is itself a kind of explanation. Sometimes it may even take its place beside them in a sort of independence as *description*, example, metaphor, individualising. When, *e.g.*, it is said in Isa. lx. 2, "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people," we must not merely explain what sort of darkness is meant, but the condition of non-Christian peoples in some respects is to be described as darkness, and then, similarly, the disposition of the human heart, which is still far from Christ. Or when it is said, "Thy light is come," let us describe how this light arises in various stages, in the law and in the prophets, in Christ Himself and the Christianising of the nations, and finally in individual hearts by the illumination of the Holy Spirit on to complete regeneration, by which one becomes a child of light. Thus this truth becomes more and more plain, concrete, intelligible, applicable to the hearer in particular. With

regard to the source from which we may obtain *examples*, Nietzsche justly reminds us that we should use also "the infinitely rich treasure of missionary history, which makes the words of prophets and apostles so very real to us again."

*He who lacks the gift of illustration should only become the more absorbed in the rhetoric of Christ, and of the prophets and apostles*: for all conceivable means and methods of true illustration and individualising are presented to us in great abundance in Scripture. This is certainly a greater help and surer guide than if we were to get from the "editor of a homiletic magazine" (Nietzsche, S. 118) or compiler of anecdotes a pound of meat or fish for our dry bread, for the further nourishment of our hearers, or to try by borrowed crumbs and flowers to obtain an easier opening and more favourable reception for our scanty dish.

It is obvious that a rhetorical amplification is little suited for the *introduction* even in the case of homilies. It may often be particularly suitable in the second half of the sermon, towards the close, which thereby becomes more impressive. But let us strictly avoid *mere* rhetoric; it is never a necessity, but only a hindrance to true edification; it is smoke and vapour, but not a kindling fire.

(2) *The Conclusion*.—The conclusion is specially important for producing blessed fruit, because it has to seal the impression of the whole. As it is conditioned by the whole contents and character of the sermon, the less can any definite rule be laid down for it in the matter of extent, subject, and form of expression. As the sealing and enforcing of the whole,—gathering together once more the principal threads from all the parts, and with increased impressiveness in exhortation, warning, and promise bringing them to bear on the hearts of the hearers,—as is indicated in the very word "Amen," it has to form a sort of independent section, not, indeed, within the division, because it must stand *outside* the individual parts, but in the sermon as a whole, and must therefore be perceptibly distinguished in tone and bearing from the sentences which precede it. If the preceding development of thought was somewhat calmly pursued, a fresh increase of force is desirable for the impressiveness of the conclusion. If the

previous part of the sermon was somewhat vigorous, perhaps somewhat stormy, the conclusion should be marked by a calmer statement, in order to ensure for the emotion a firmer hold, a more lasting effect. If the preacher intentionally breaks off the train of thought in an abrupt fashion, in order thereby to produce a more incisive effect, the whole should at least be concluded in harmony, not only with the subjective impression which it is to leave behind, but also, objectively, with its own contents.

Among the *principal forms* possible for the conclusion, the most ancient is the *Doxology*, by which the sermon is at once connected with the following liturgical parts of the service. The same effect is produced by a conclusion with *prayer*, which, however, on account of the prescribed prayer that follows, should not be too long. Frequently the form is that of a mere *wish*, and more frequently that of a *promise*, e.g. "Well for him who"—"happy is the man who," etc., or that of a concluding *exhortation*, *appeal*, *invitation*, and *blessing*, or, finally, the expression of a *common resolve*. With all these forms, the best arrangement, as a rule, will be for the last word to be an appropriate *passage of Scripture*, or to be connected with one, so that the sermon, as it has had its source in the Scriptures, should flow into them again. *A verse of a hymn* is also often to be recommended instead of this as a kind of Church confession on the subject which has been treated of, and as a transition to the liturgy and singing. Frequently, too, it is a good thing for the conclusion, as a summary of the whole, to *refer* in some way *to the beginning of the sermon*; in this way the whole discourse is harmoniously completed, and in some cases even the thesis may be repeated. But it is clearly essential that the last of the conclusion should always be *crangelical*, *conciliatory*, *conveying invitation and promise*, and that therefore the preacher should not finish in an element of threatening, of rebuke, of hope and grace cut off, because this, moreover, is not, as a rule, the method of the divine word, especially of the gospel.

A good, vigorous conclusion will raise even a poor sermon and make it fruitful; a bad and halting one will take the point from the impression of a good amplification which has preceded it. Let us not content ourselves here, any more than at the beginning, with generalities which suit any sermon. There are indeed beautiful, *general* conclusions, e.g. one of Tauler's: "Beloved children, remain with yourselves for a little and do not run away, and let the Word of God work in you. This every man should do when he has heard the Word of God, and especially such deep truth, and should attend to it and ponder over it just as if he had received the sacrament. May God help us all so to do. Amen." Now and then we may use such general concluding wishes; but ordinarily let us take *the trouble to glance once more over the whole*, in order to draw together again the threads of the whole in one concluding exhortation which touches the kernel of the subject, and arises out of its central thought; to apply it to our hearers, and to give it to them to take home as the *net result*, so to speak, as pure, clear gold distilled from the whole process of discourse which has gone before—whether this gold be a new or deeper view of doctrine, or a newly enforced exhortation or warning, or fresh comfort drawn from the fountain of Scripture. The conclusion must of course be determined by the whole character of the sermon. He who *makes the application* throughout the whole sermon does not need to have a special application at the close, but should rather conclude with some short, striking, impressive exhortations. But he who has been chiefly *expounding* in the sermon, operating didactically upon the intelligence, should have more of application at the close.

If at the close the preacher takes his position *towards the congregation*, the conclusion will be directly in words of exhortation, appeal, wish, and blessing or promise. If he takes his place *as one with the congregation*, the closing exhortation will be expressed as a resolve, the promise as a hope. If, finally, the preacher appears *before God for or with the congregation*, the exhortation becomes a vow, wish and hope become a prayer. The preacher must make a free choice among these methods under divine guidance as *συνεργός Θεού*, with the constant thought that this may be for one or another of his hearers *the last opportunity* of hearing the call of God to his heart.

But whatever form we may choose, the end must always be *evangelical*. Threatening and warning may and must appear, no doubt, even in the conclusion, but the final part of the conclusion should always be in the spirit of *reconciliation*, once more giving a tender and impressive invitation, unfolding the riches of the love of God in Christ, and therefore encouraging, not discouraging, the greatest sinner. Paul and the other apostles, as a rule, close their epistles with blessing, even when serious reproof and solemn threatenings went before. We do not need to be more severe than they.

It is even worse than words of threatening *for us to draw out again the sting which has penetrated*. Many preachers possess the unhappy art, after a sharp sermon, by some turn at the close, especially *by false and misleading generalisation*, of leading their hearers immediately back again into the old indifference and security, and thus giving the deathblow to the whole sermon in many hearts.

#### (γ) HOMILETIC DICTION.

Since the sermon has to proceed from the exposition of sacred records, composed in peculiar language, since it serves a definite, sacred end, and is, as congregational preaching, an act of the Church's worship, it also must have its *peculiar*, religious and sacred, *biblical and ecclesiastical style of oratory*, its language determined and penetrated by the spirit of truth and holiness. Since, however, it is intended, not for a particular class, but for the whole congregation with all degrees of education, it must at the same time be *popular* in its diction. The two requisites, biblical, ecclesiastical style and popular language are not—rightly understood—mutually exclusive, but inclusive. For, to meet the varied spiritual needs of all together, it is just the biblical language that alone is adequate, combining as it does with the most intelligible brevity and clearness the greatest depth, with the plainest simplicity the most effective force, with the most winning gentleness and kindness the most sacred earnestness. Hence, not only is the history of the German written language based from the beginning

on the translation of the Bible, but in particular the new High German language—much as it needs purifying in our time, especially for the pulpit—is, by reason of its foundation, Luther's *translation of the Bible*, in body and soul an essentially Protestant language, thoroughly penetrated with the moulding spirit and force of the gospel, and is the more scriptural and popular the purer it is. The German homilist, therefore, the more he abides in his language by *the Bible* and the Church, is the more thoroughly with his *people*. Just as the doctrine of faith is for the congregation, the true wisdom and learning, so there is nothing more classical for it than the language of the Bible (Nitzsch, S. 123). But popular homiletic diction is not therefore that which regards the congregation, without further question, as *populus Dei*, and speaks to them accordingly, but that which is *intelligible*, and at the same time *heart-winning* for the whole people. Moreover, as biblical, ecclesiastical peculiarity of style and language and a popular conversational tone do not exclude, but require one another, so also they do not hinder the appearance of the *personal individuality* of the homilist any more than they hindered it in the case of the prophets and apostles, among whom the distinctive language of an Isaiah and a Jeremiah, of a Paul, Peter, John, and James, are evidence enough for the freedom of individual development. Only the element of spiritual language in the Bible must be vitally absorbed in the individual mode of speech, and the latter must be thus consecrated for service in holiness.

Cf. Stier, *Keryktik*, 2 Aufl. S. 175 ff., "On the moulding and purifying of the language of Church and pulpit by the language of the Bible."

*Scripturality* is the first requisite for homiletic diction. As other kinds of oratory, e.g. the political, the legal, demand a peculiar style, suited to the subject, or the nationality, or other circumstances, so also does preaching, both mission preaching and congregational preaching, each with appropriate modification. But because the sermon in both forms is based on holy Scripture, the peculiar style of its language

is determined above all by Scripture, and in such a way that the whole tone and spirit of Scripture language pervades and hallows the diction of the pulpit orator. As our whole process of thought as creatures is only a thinking of God's thoughts *after Him*, if it is to be true, so also our preaching is only an *after*-preaching and interpreting of what has been already preached before us in Scripture by Christ and all witnesses of revelation, and must therefore be moulded in accordance with it not only in substance, but also in language and expression, without requiring to abandon the individual colour of the preacher's personality.

But preaching is, besides, the common property of the Christian people and of the peoples generally, to which all men have a claim according to the will of God and Christ; hence the preacher must speak in the language of a popular assembly. Both of these, *scriptural language and popular language*, go hand in hand; and this for two reasons:—

*First*, because it is precisely *the language of the Bible that alone is adequate for the needs of all*, according to the various grades of their moral and religious state and of their knowledge. There we have before us partly children of God who, with their unction, do not need that anyone should teach them (1 John ii. 27); partly baptized persons who are still in need of instruction and desire the *λογικὸν γάλα* of the Word (1 Pet. ii. 2); partly the unconverted, who nevertheless through Church teaching know and respect the outward word of Scripture; and partly contradictory and obstinate persons, *ἀντιλέγοντες* (Tit. 1. 9), *ἀντιδιατιθέμενοι* (2 Tim. ii. 25), who can only be humbled by the superior power of the divine words. *For these needs of all together nothing will suffice but the biblical mode of speech*, which remains profitable and helpful even for those who are enlightened and anointed from above, brings the right word to those who are uncertain about their state, touches those who are Christians in name by their still existing respect for the Scriptures, and puts the truth of the divine revelation before its opponents with all clearness and definiteness.

*The second reason* is an external one. *The language of the people, especially the German, has historically been moulded on the language of the Bible.* As the Hellenes, according to the law of the world's history, became the teachers of the language of human *science* and art, so the prophets and apostles became the teachers of all nations in the language



of the revealed *religion* of mankind, the language of Christianity. "The whole history of the language of the Greek Church depends on the Greek Bible, through the Fathers of the third and fourth centuries; the language of the Latin Church on the Vulgate and the *Itala*, through Augustin: the Germanic on the German translation of the Bible, through Ulfilas, and in particular through Luther" (Nitzsch, S. 123). The latter version is connected with the beginning of the New High German language as its kernel and foundation, for it has moulded our language afresh and creatively to a degree in which perhaps no spiritual work ever acted formatively and in deepening fashion on a language. The New High German language, which is spoken to-day, is in body and soul the Protestant dialect, which owes to Luther and the gospel chiefly its freedom-breathing nature, its force, fulness, and beauty, as well as its adoption as the written language of the learned. In the case of the old classical languages, it is not the essence of religion which animates them; our language is essentially pervaded and even partly moulded by the spirit of the gospel. The language of our newspaper writers, often, too, of our learned men with its chaos of foreign words, is indeed frequently very little thus animated, but the language of the best part of our people is so, up to the present day. The freshness and original force, the terseness and conciseness, the plain simplicity and serious depth of the language of Scripture, and in our own case, of Luther's translation, have to the present day stamped their spiritual impress upon our popular language. What follows? That *scripturalità and popularity of language are inseparable.*

In the *Roman Catholic Church* the scholastic and ecclesiastical language of the clergy—who are almost the sole possessors of the Scriptures—lacks a common element of agreement with the language of the congregation; hence the eagerly sought, unscriptural street-popularity of zealous Catholic preachers who feel that the scriptural mode of speech must be as unintelligible to the laity as the Papal Bulls.

When Palmer, in connection with the idea of popularity, makes a last attempt to justify his fundamental conception of preaching, that it should assume the congregation to be composed of believers, and says that the idea of popularity is based on the fact that the congregation is everywhere regarded as essentially a *populus Dei*, this attempt is plainly a forced one, for the qualifying word *Dei* has in the first

instance nothing to do with the idea of *populus*. Popularity means this only, that we should speak to the whole *populus* in all its strata, in all its stages of age and of education *intelligibly and winningly*; for love to the people must also be perceptible in the speaker. He who regards the people in the sense of the aristocratic "Odi profanum vulgus et arceo," will never become popular, no matter how he may speak so as to be intelligible to all.

But he who is perhaps naturally inclined to seek popularity in burlesque and slang expressions, should first pray for that live coal which had to touch and purify the lips even of an Isaiah before he became the messenger of God.

Accordingly, so far as *the use of words* is first concerned, the language of the sermon must study a noble popularity by adhering to that of the *holy Scriptures*, and therefore, by exclusion of what is rough as well as of mannerism, of the unrestrained as well as of the forced, of that which is foreign as well as of the accidental, should seek its sacred distinctiveness in the combination of the *dignified* with the *intelligible and simple*, of the *serious* and *deep* with the *true* and *pure*. It must not shrink from describing vices and sins by the *plain*, severe words of the Bible, which not only is not offensive to true morality, but is necessary for its right preservation. It must always describe, in order to remain intelligible, fundamental biblical conceptions by biblical expressions, *e.g.* repentance, faith, sanctification, sonship, temptation, etc., and concede to words which have a rationalistic flavour, such as Providence, happiness, a better life, etc., only a limited use. It should further show by keeping separate, or at least distinguishing, cognate ideas such as long-suffering and patience, goodness and mercy, *i.e.* by strict accuracy in synonyms, faithfulness and carefulness in little things. Finally, by *avoiding unnecessary foreign words*, of which only a few have become completely naturalised (such as majesty, talent, element, testament, passion, triumph, mission, reformers) and such as belong to a sphere of life which is not the home of the Christian congregation (*e.g.* ideas, maxims, politics, atheists,

positive, negative, to define, etc.<sup>1</sup>) and frequently on account of their abstract character have a somewhat pedantic flavour, or, especially in the case of beginners, remind one of the essay tone (*e.g.* "self-consciousness," "process of development," the frequent use of "reference," "relationship" and the like)—let it preserve *purity* of expression and of the popular language. For the rest let the verbal expression be regulated in the matter of swing, or calm soberness, or pregnant conciseness, according to the nature and elevation of the thoughts.

What Schuppianus says: *Sentiamus cum sapientibus loquamur cum vulgo*, is a good rule. Theological knowledge, in order to enter into the language of the sermon, must lay aside its scientific garb; but this process, as Rothe rightly reminds us, will only succeed if the knowledge thus to be transformed is really thorough and quite clear; a confused, half clear knowledge can never be properly popularised. Let no one say that everything which has to be said cannot be expressed in intelligible German. That is a delusion which has been completely refuted by preachers like Schleiermacher, Therenin, and others. Whatever cannot be said in pure German, such as doctrinal subtleties and peculiarities—it is no harm if this remains unspoken from the pulpit (Palmer, S. 480).

Our German language has certainly become much richer, unfortunately, since the sixteenth century, in abstract modes of speech, and poorer in concrete, plastic expressions, which in natural references reveal the mind, and in spiritual references equally reveal nature. But if we consider only the treasure of words in the German *Bible* and in the German evangelical *Hymn Book*, the richest in Protestant Christendom (over 70,000), it is rich enough for us to avoid the now so widespread evil of corrupt pulpit-speech, in which the most frivolous use of the watchwords and catchwords of the spirit of the time, a moving about in the chaos of foreign words, or a frequently unconscious use of scholastic theological terminology, is allowed. Hence Nietzsche complains (S. 172): "There is prevalent a wanton contempt for

<sup>1</sup> The author is, of course, referring to the German usage of these and similar words. [Trans.]

the rights of the language of the people, and scarcely any nation has to suffer so much from that as the German."

It is also advisable to replace *too modern words* and ideas by cognate biblical ones, provided that this does no violence to clearness. This is especially desirable for prayer. Instead of saying, for example, "Protect our soldiers from the bullets of the enemy," it is certainly in better taste, from a homiletical and especially from a liturgical point of view, to say, "Protect our soldiers from the arrows of death." If we concede only a very restricted use to words like "virtue" and "happiness," this is partly because they are only rarely found in holy Scripture (the word "virtue" does not appear once in all the Four Gospels, and only once in the Epistles of St. Paul, Phil. iv. 8), and partly in particular because the masters of eloquence in the eighteenth century, Gellert, Joh. Andr. Cramer, Lavater, and Peter Miller, raised such and similar expressions almost to sole domination in homiletic diction, and thus gave great assistance to their rationalistic followers.

With regard to the *plainness* of pulpit speech, let us not hesitate to call everything by its true biblical name. If sins of adultery and fornication have to be rebuked, let us not beat about the bush. But it is one thing *to name* such sins and quite another thing to consider such dark domains in detail. The latter is of evil; the former is necessary for sharpening the conscience in the very interests of morality and its maintenance. A model for us in this connection is the way in which the New Testament speaks of sexual offences. It remains an obvious rule that "entirely the spirit, and never the flesh of the speaker, must decide about such matters" (Kübel). A preacher somewhat advanced in years, raised as far as possible above such temptations, occupying the position of a father to the congregation, will be able to move more freely in the treatment of such matters than a young man, who only ventures with fear and trembling to touch on these topics.

A vigorously German, clear, popular pulpit language may be learnt from Luther, Val. Herberger, Heinrich Müller, Comr. Rieger, Claudius, Ludw. Hofacker, Ludw. Harms; a somewhat more refined speech from Schleiermacher, Ahlfeld, Theremin, Dräseke, Cl. Harms, Gerok; a very fine speech, almost too much curled and arranged in ringlets, from Beyschlag.

With regard to the homiletic *structure of sentences and periods*, let the sentences be, as a rule, *short*, the structure of periods as simple as possible, the clauses not tediously subordinated, but as much as possible co-ordinated, without piling up parentheses. A structure of several clauses should not be, at least, in both antecedent and conclusion *at the same time*, so that the period may not become involved, but may come quickly to a close. Further, let us avoid tautologies, and *let the speech always keep equal pace with the thoughts*. Fulness is no doubt sometimes desirable, but bombastic language is always evil. The oratorical *period* should make speech more vivid and impressive, but never stilted and theatrical. A too frequent recurrence of one and the same figure blunts the impression. Here also the holy Scriptures present us with the greatest wealth of degrees and methods of construction of sentences, and the most manifold variety of oratorical periods. Transitions which remind one rather of the essay style, *e.g.* "this would carry us too far" or "how much might still be said on this subject," etc., which chiefly suggest only the wealth of our own knowledge, or even such as assume too much knowledge of the Scriptures on the part of the congregation—*e.g.* "on this point we may compare Psalm so and so, Isaiah, chapter so and so"—are unhomiletic, because unprofitable.

## 2. THE DELIVERY OF THE SERMON.

- HOPPIN, *Theory and Method of Preaching*, 1876.  
 ZINCKE, *The Duty and Discipline of Extemporaneous Preaching*, London, 1866.  
 STORRS, *Conditions of Successful Preaching without Notes*, New York, 1875.  
 E. PALLESKE, *Die Kunst des Vortrags*, Stuttgart, 1850 (worldly, but with nice hints on the grading of the voice according to the matter in hand; but it is necessary to avoid the theatrical and to keep to simplicity!).  
 SCHUSTER, *Der gute Vortrag eine Kunst und eine Tugend*, 1881.

Even *the reading of the text* is no unimportant matter. Proper emphasis is already half an explanation. In the case of a historical text let us become vividly absorbed in the scene and read with a thorough understanding of it; let us also in some way indicate by our tone the varied emotions of the persons speaking, but without attempting to imitate in dramatic fashion the different voices. In the case of doctrinal texts let us accentuate by slow, solemn delivery the leading points of the truths therein contained. The shorter the text, the more slowly should it be read, to let it be seen that every word of it is of importance.

For the actual *production of the sermon* before the congregation, *i.e.* its delivery, the *fundamental requisite* is that the speaker *must be thoroughly master* of everything that he brings before the people. That is, he must be master—(1) of what he wants to say, of *the whole sermon* in form and substance; (2) of his *voice*, of tone and expression; (3) of his *bodily attitude* and gesture. Thus only can the two other requirements be fulfilled, that the whole method of delivery must be *that which is natural to each person*, and at the same time, allowing for all freedom of personal individuality in the whole appearance, should always be suited to the sacred aim of the discourse, and *to the dignity and solemnity of public worship*. Unartificial naturalness and truth, dignity and purity, vivacity and a certain amount of self-restraint may be added to the above fundamental requirement as special requisites. The highest level of delivery is reached when the congregation perceives in the preacher, along with all seriousness of sacred testimony, a certain *joyousness*; along with the most intense moral and even bodily effort, a certain ease of delivery.

(a) *Mastery of the matter*.—To gain complete mastery of the matter, to have sure and firm possession of the discourse itself, demands, especially on the part of younger preachers, but also on the part of those who are more practised, as an indispensable duty,—which only a few favoured spirits, such as *Schleiermacher*, *Spurgeon*, and

others, have been able, without real harm, to dispense with,—the *previous complete composition and memorising of the essential parts*. In the case of the beginner, this memorising should be done *verbatim*, whilst he who has, just by such preparation, attained a greater practice in expression, need not bind himself slavishly to his manuscript any longer, but will and must often interweave *extemporaneously* much that only occurs to him during his sermon, the more fully and directly he places himself under the guidance of the Lord and His spirit. A careful reading over of the sermon two or three times will, as a rule, soon be quite sufficient. At the same time the delivery, even where the sermon has been committed to memory *verbatim*, should produce upon the hearer as little as possible the impression of what has been learned by heart, schoolboy-like, but rather *that of being extemporaneously reproduced and flowing fresh from the heart*. This can succeed in the case of one who is tied to his manuscript only if he has previously obtained from above, by thorough absorption in the truths of the text, the true *parrhesia* for bearing testimony, and if therefore his sermon is not merely a man-made, but also a God-given one. To strive after freedom from *composition* in course of time must be a danger for most, as well as prejudicial to the thorough edification especially of educated hearers. Even then, however, a certain amount of *meditatio et oratio* is indispensable. For the mastery, after which everyone should strive, consists neither in the capacity to deliver a sermon without preparation, quite impromptu, nor in repeating exactly *verbatim* a composition which has been committed to memory (Reinhard), but *in the higher union of these opposites*, by which *we produce before the congregation, with freedom and freshness, that which has been previously carefully prepared, or at anyrate thought out*. Thus the sermon retains the character of directness and freshness, and at the same time avoids the danger of immature, ill-arranged, and unfinished thoughts being interjected. In the comfortable custom, still much in vogue

in England, of *reading the sermon*, the latter danger is of course removed, but at the same time the necessary freshness and directness are easily lost. This eustom is injurious to the witness-character of preaching and to its fruitful operation, for that which is to open men's hearts must come from the heart.

At first, therefore, *composition* and *verbatim memorising*, and then *less and less verbatim memorising* and *more of free reproduction before the congregation*, perhaps also with the interweaving of new thoughts, this is the right way to a fresh, vigorous delivery, which at the same time has constant mastery of the material. It is certainly a way which at the beginning costs much time and trouble, and along which we pass through many a narrow door and much inward struggle, both in composition and also in memorising and in delivery; but a way of which it may with truth be said: "*perfer et obdura, dolor hic tibi proderit olim.*" This is the way to fluency of expression, to the *copia verborum*, by the attainment of which the verbatim memorising may in course of time be more and more dispensed with. *With continuous practice the initial difficulties of extemporaneous delivery and of memorising disappear very soon.* What at the beginning used to cost days is afterwards accomplished in hours, and finally a quiet careful reading-over two or three times will be sufficient. Half the labour of memorising lies in the preparation, if it keeps close to the train of thought. "Hesitations in memory are often nothing else than punished defects of the plan and its amplification" (Nitzsch, S. 132).

The above way is also the only true *via media* for avoiding two very erroneous and dangerous extremes for pedantic *verbatim repetition*, such as Reinhard, for example, insisted on, which easily hinders and suppresses the free movement of the spirit, and, on the other hand, the presumption with which, in false dependence on the assistance of the Spirit, men try to *shake a sermon from their sleeve*. The latter is often found, especially among spiritualistic sectaries, who regard it as an interference with divine guidance if we tie ourselves by much study to the train of thought. This dangerous prejudice does not agree either with the well-proved fundamental rule of Luther: *meditatio, tentatio, oratio*, or with the Holy Spirit's mode of operation in



general; for it is strictly true of the latter: *Do your part and God will do His*, but not—Make the Spirit the minister of your convenience. The human effort should be carried on in God and under the guidance of the Spirit, and should also even in the delivery leave room for the Spirit to supplement and expand that which has been committed to memory. When once some practice in expression has been attained, we can then treat our composition with freedom in the pulpit, if the Spirit leads us, provided that on the basis of careful preparation we keep firm ground under our feet, to which we can return immediately after each extemporaneous digression. *Claus Harms* was once asked by some who spoke the Word without preparation under the free control of the Spirit, whether he did not also hear in such a case the voice of the Spirit with special clearness. "Yes," he replied, "I hear it then too. The Spirit then always says, 'Claus, thou hast been very lazy.'"

*Only in cases of necessity*, if, for example, we have to help a ministerial brother who has been suddenly taken ill and have no time for preparation, let us have recourse to impromptu preaching. In that case God will do the rest, and help us through when we humbly ask Him.

It is one thing, however, to break oneself gradually from strict *memorising* and quite another thing to give up *composition*. When a *Schleiermacher*, a *Spurgeon*, or a *Mallet* does the latter, no one can object to their doing so: but one case is not a rule for all. Even one who thinks himself sufficiently gifted and with sufficient spiritual unction to do this should examine himself before he attempts it, whether perhaps a little personal ease, perhaps also laziness and too strong self-confidence may not enter into the case. If we have once begun it, we shall not readily return, for comfort's sake, to the troublesome composing: therefore, *principiis obsta!* On the other hand, we freely admit that experienced preachers do not at last require to compose *the whole sermon* word for word: in their case the leading thoughts may be sufficient, the ribs, on which the flesh may grow during the delivery. But *meditatio* and *oratio* remain always indispensable. For dispensing with *meditatio*, no one can appeal to the example of the apostles. For who will tell us that Paul, for example, before he went into a synagogue and

preached, did not first meditate on the most striking passages which he might lay before the Jews, in order to prove that Jesus was the Messiah? But in whatever way the preparation may be carried out, *the sermon should never produce upon our hearers the impression of being learned by heart*; the hearer ought rather to get the impression that what the preacher says proceeds from him through real necessity. Hence the *verbatim writing and memorising* of the sermon should not be regarded as the highest form of sermon preparation. Preachers of much unction, who with their rich Christian experience get at the heart of the text, allow themselves, after appropriate *meditatio* and *oratio* and *dispositio*, to obtain what is necessary in the pulpit from the influences of the Spirit, as men who have put themselves entirely at the disposal of the Lord; they would regard more exact composition and memorising as a kind of little-faith and too much anxiety about the morrow. Others, again, would regard the omission of composition as a kind of tempting of God, and would enter the pulpit without it with an uneasy conscience; they allow themselves to obtain what is necessary from God in the very act of composition. Let each one go his own way looking up to God, and speak with the unction which brings with it under all circumstances a certain joyousness of witness-bearing. Tholuck (as quoted above) says: "We cannot describe the difference which there is between the effect of a sermon which is spoken from the pulpit merely *from memory*, no matter how excellent it may be—and one which is *born* there for the second time in living faith. The sermon must be an *act* in the study, and again an *act* in the pulpit. The preacher, when he descends from the pulpit, should feel a *mother's joy*, the joy of a mother who under God's blessing has borne a child. Only thus will the sermon be an act in the *hearer* also." But in addition to this, *the sigh of solemn prayer is necessary in the sacristy also*. There we should pray that the Lord would build a wall of fire around us against all distraction from within and from without; that He would turn the water of the weaker passages of our composition into wine, that He would make the few loaves and fishes sufficient for the hunger of the whole congregation: that He would give us all the time true freshness and joyousness, impressive earnestness and zeal, so that we may not fulfil our duties mechanically, and may not become a clanging

cymbal; that He would preserve us from feelings of vanity when we see that something has produced an impression; and that He would take away our sins, for "the sins of the preacher hinder most the course of the divine word." *A good conscience*, the inner feeling of reconciliation, is above all necessary in order to proclaim the gospel with joyousness and profit.

The English method of *reading the sermon*, which, however, prevails more in the Established Church than among the Dissenters, originated with the *Book of Homilies* which Cramer (with good intention) prescribed for the clergy, who were then mostly Catholic, with restriction of extempore preaching. There is, at the same time, a difference between reading and reading. We can read *with such vivacity* that the hearer scarcely notices the difference from extempore delivery, and this is the case with many English preachers. In our circumstances, the reading of the sermon is a convenience which can only be permitted, as an exception, to old preachers and those of feeble memory. Preaching is *an act*, a free, personal process, a testimony of the heart, not an act of reading, which changes divine service into a lecture, and puts a sheet of paper as a barrier between speaker and hearer. For the rest, the *great* English preachers of modern times all speak extempore, and in America also extempore preaching seems to prevail more and more.

(b) With regard to the *voice and tone* of the preacher, it is to be above all observed that they will only strike the deepest chords in their hearers if they proceed from a heart that is full of *earnest holy love* and tender sympathy, and that the "clanging cymbal" will only be avoided if the speaker puts *soul* into all his words. In this way, even with an organ unfavourable in itself, a tone of heart and soul will blend itself with the speaking voice, which reaches men's hearts and even counteracts the effect of that unfavourable element. The latter, however, may and ought, by diligent practice in distinct and full enunciation, be raised or even softened. For the rest, there are four necessary requisites:—(1) Adapting oneself to the place or *audibility* in the whole building; (2) adapting oneself

to the dignity of the whole act, or *solemnity*; (3) adapting oneself to the subject of the particular thought which is to be expounded, or inner *truth*; (4) adapting oneself to one's individual organ, and also to the disposition of the preacher, or *naturalness*. These characteristics mutually limit one another, inasmuch as, *e.g.* the too natural, intimate tone is detrimental to dignity, the merely solemn or stiff tone is prejudicial to naturalness. Further, the place must also determine the pitch and strength of tone, as well as the time of it. But even while putting forth the most vigorous effort, a dispassionate, self-restraining *repose* is desirable. The truth and naturalness of expression, together with the living contents of the discourse, will of themselves carry with them the necessary variety. The singing, monotonous, or unnaturally grave *pulpit tone* is just as injudicious and unlovely as zeal which blusters along equally from beginning to end, which by its uniformity stupefies the hearer. To let the voice show its full strength at the very beginning is usually not so natural as if the speaker, after a somewhat quiet beginning, gradually gets on fire. The *pronunciation* ought to be, in accordance with the dignity of the subject, *pure*, but natural, without affected disguising of one's provincial accent, yet avoiding everything unlovely and coarse which the particular dialect may happen to have in it.

(e) Even for the *bodily attitude and action, dignity, naturalness*, and suitability to the contents of the actual discourse are the fundamental requisite. The latter will of itself draw the body of the preacher sometimes more towards the congregation, sometimes more into itself; at the same time, the change of position, or too much and too rapid movement, and especially the constant rhythm of moving backwards and forwards, are bad. *The action*, as a means whereby the preacher gives vent to his inner emotion, and as a representation of the word, a symbolical expression of the thought, should, even more than the attitude, be closely connected with the subject of the discourse as a thoroughly *natural, almost involuntary*

*accompaniment.* Only let us beware, partly of *uniform* movement, accompanying different subjects with the same gesture; partly of *disproportionate* action, whether it be too *frequent* and constant or too *violent*, passing the limits of what is graceful and dignified; partly of action executed *only* with the fingers or with the fists, or even the elbows; partly, in short, of every action which is not related to the subject-matter of the discourse in true unity and congruity, *e.g.* accompanying the subject of a sentence with a movement of the right hand, and the predicate with the left, or action and gesture without words. Generally speaking, our rule would be: rather too little than too much action!

*To sum up:* As in the whole *contents* of the sermon, so also in its form and in its delivery down to the action everything should *support and confirm the witness-character of the sermon*, and thus increase its profitable influence.

In the matter of bodily attitude and action, as well as in the duration of the sermon, *national customs and ideas* have their influence. The gesticulation of preachers in southern lands is much more lively than in northern countries. Even an Englishman, and still more an American, tolerates more of this than we cooler and critically-disposed Germans. Moving about the pulpit is among us offensive; but when Spurgeon, on whose platform perhaps fifty people are seated, moves briskly six paces back and forward, no one is offended at this plastic representation of the subject of his discourse. Our pulpits do not in themselves permit of such promenades, but it is nevertheless possible to change our position, and this occasionally happens if a special class in the congregation, which may sit separated according to sexes and age, is addressed. The proper course is always to remain standing in the centre, and only by a slight movement of the head, about a quarter or an eighth to one side or the other, to indicate that we are specially addressing those who sit there. Besides, it is better and more natural if the family—husband, wife, and children—sit together.

For all these external things our hearers have an uncommonly sharp eye and a good memory. If any mishap befalls us, whether it be in memory or in a gesture, or if

we make a mistake, such as letting something fall or the like, there are many who after the service will only speak of this mistake. We would therefore urgently recommend the avoidance of everything unnatural and ungraceful even in attitude. The preacher should stand erect in the pulpit, not leaning comfortably with his elbows on the pulpit-board, not nodding his head with every sentence, not moving himself monotonously backwards and forwards (still less from side to side), etc.

The rules which can be given *for action* are almost entirely of a *negative kind*. The positive—dignity, naturalness, appropriateness—are obvious. *The best action is the involuntary*, when the speaker does not know that he is using gesture. Let us not practice it artificially like that court-preacher before the mirror. This can only be done by one who seeks honour from men rather than from God. But whoever places himself completely, even with all his external powers, senses, and members, at the disposal of the Lord and His Spirit; he who does everything with Him, in Him, through Him, for Him—his preaching will be in matter and form the right and fruitful kind. Practice must of course make the master in this also; and if it is true of any art, it is true of homiletics that we *never become perfect in it*. *Ars longa, vita brevis*. A Christian, however, can also say, *ars longa, vita aeterna*. The practice of the *ars homiletica* in this life should send a sweet, full, and enduring echo into the life eternal, to the praise of the Preacher of all preachers, the Prophet of all prophets, to whose holy service our work is consecrated.

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